

GOD'S JEWELS

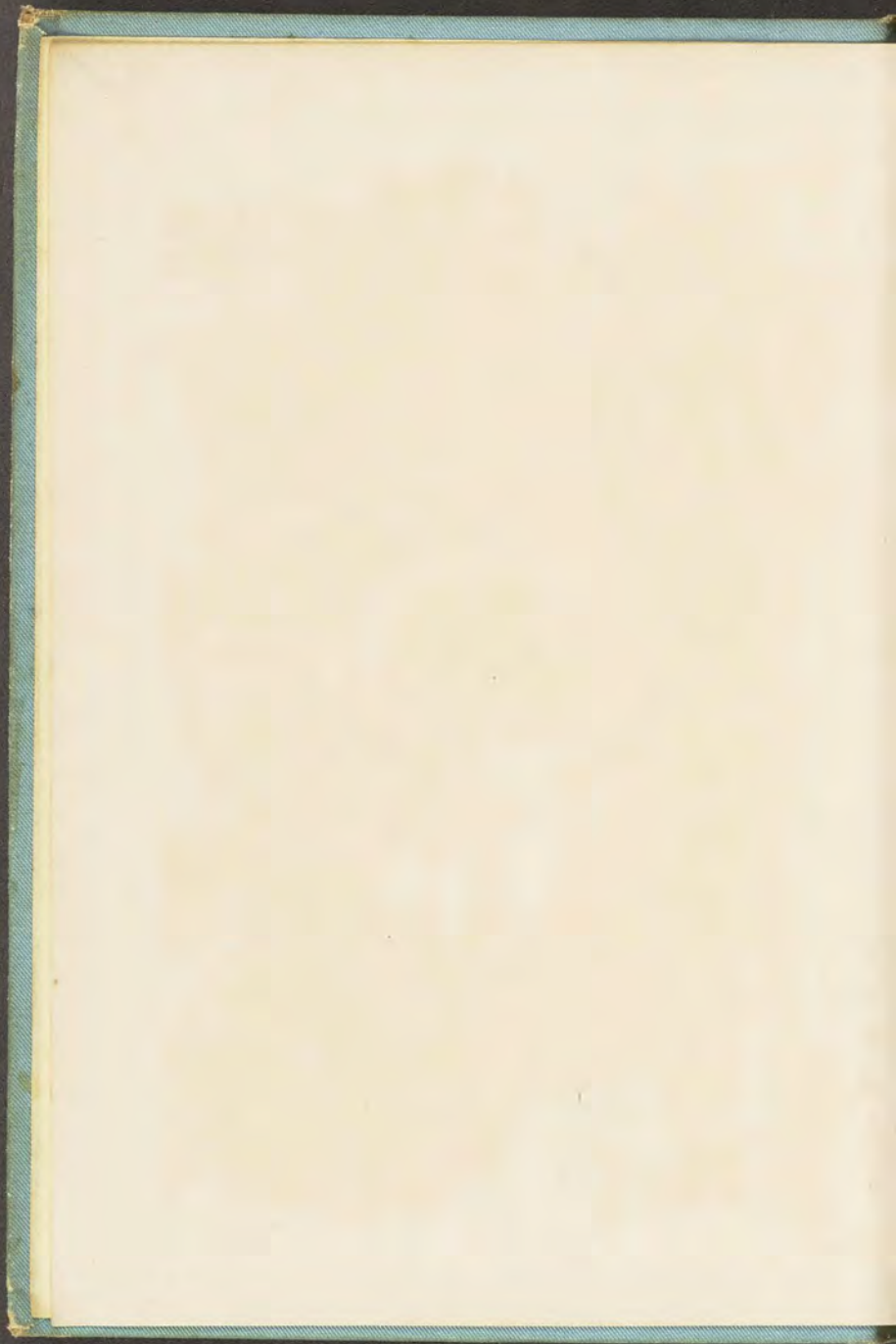
THEIR DIGNITY AND DESTINY.



W. F. Kullback

GEMS

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GOD'S JEWELS:

THEIR DIGNITY AND DESTINY.

BY

W. Y. FULLERTON.

"THERE IS A JEWEL WHICH NO INDIAN MINE CAN BUY,
NO CHEMIC ART CAN COUNTERFEIT."

Wordsworth.

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P R E F A C E .

THAT I may gain the confidence of the friendly reader, I am at once free to confess that I possess no gems, and that any study I may have given them has been chiefly at museum cases and jewellers' windows; inexpensive sources of information open to us all.

This volume is not the effect of a sudden impulse. It had its beginning in a Sunday evening Sermon at the Metropolitan Tabernacle, now, perhaps, eight years ago. Since then it has grown, until, like the City of the New Jerusalem, it possesses twelve foundations, and each of precious stones.

During these years everything has been contributory: observation, conversation, books, periodicals, newspapers; and now, in most instances, I am at a loss to apportion the various items, or to make due acknowledgment of the many obligations under which I have been laid. Indeed, the sources are so numerous that their very recital were wearisome, even if I recollected them. So I must content myself by expressing my gratitude to all who have helped me.

My special thanks are, however, due to Mr. Edwin W. Streeter, for personal kindness, and for much technical information and a few woodcuts from his unequalled books on "*Precious Stones*," "*Great Diamonds*," and "*Pearls*," the standard works of reference on these subjects in the English tongue.

But though I have thus striven to be scientifically and technically accurate, my chief aim has been so to illustrate and enforce Christian truth, that the romance of the earthly subject may lead the reader to the surpassing marvel of the far more precious heavenly truth.

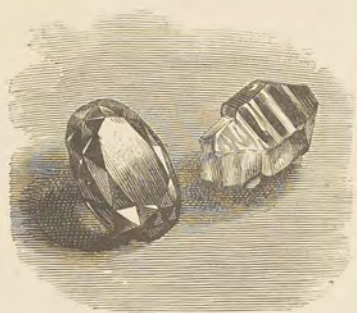
It will be noticed that the pages are not burdened and broken by references to Scripture chapter and verse. These have been placed in order at the end of the book in such a way as to be readily accessible ; and, in addition, there will be found an index which, it is hoped, may prove useful to preachers, if any such care to make use of the illustrations, as they are heartily welcome to do.

In conclusion, I would commend the work, with all its imperfections, to the blessing of Him, whom, in these pages, I have sought to glorify.

W. F. Fullerton.

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AMETHYSTS.

A DAY is coming in which the Crown Jewels of our great King shall be counted, that it may be seen whether they answer to the inventory which His Father gave Him.

My soul, wilt thou be among the precious things of Jesus? Thou art precious to Him if He is precious to thee; and thou shalt be His "in that day" if He is thine in this day.

In the days of Malachi the chosen of the Lord were accustomed so to converse with each other, that their God Himself listened to their talk.

He liked it so well, that He took notes of it; yes, and made a book of it, which He lodged in the Record Office.

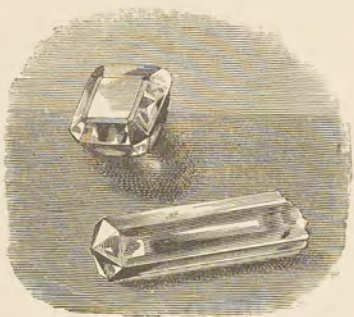
Pleased with their conversation, He was also pleased with them. Pause, my soul, and ask thyself if Jesus were to listen to thy talk, would He be pleased with it? Is it to His glory, and to the edification of the brotherhood? Say, my soul, and be sure thou sayest the truth.

But what will the honour be for us poor creatures to be reckoned by the Lord to be His Crown Jewels.

This honour have all the saints. Jesus not only says "They are Mine," but "they shall be mine."

He bought us, sought us, brought us in, and has so far wrought us to His image, that we shall be fought for by Him with all His might.

C. H. SPURGEON.



EMERALDS.



GOD'S JEWELS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SCRIPTURE SYMBOL.

FROM time immemorial men have valued gems and jewels and counted them amongst their choicest treasures. Almost on the first page of the Bible we find mention made of "gold, and bdellium and the onyx stone," as the glory of the land of Havilah, compassed by one of the rivers of Eden. Now this bdellium is probably our pearl, for Benjamin of Toledo, describing the stone called *bdellius*, found in the Indian seas, states that it had its origin from a certain dew, which, being cast into the ocean, was, after a time, gathered encrusted with shell, and found to be transformed into a jewel. As this is the ancient erroneous view of the formation of the pearl, we may take it for granted that, in addition to flowers and fruits, Eden had its treasures of pearls and precious stones.

And very soon these became the emblem of things still more precious. Job, after giving his marvellous description of the working of a mine, in chapter twenty-eight, and showing the difficulty of the search for sapphires and dust of gold, speaks of wisdom as more valuable than gold, or onyx, or sapphires. "No mention shall be made of coral, or of pearls: for the price of wisdom is above rubies. The topaz of Ethiopia shall not equal it, neither shall it be valued with pure gold." The same thought is echoed by the wise man in Proverbs. In chapter twenty, "There is gold, and a multitude of rubies: but the lips of knowledge are a precious jewel." In chapter three, "Happy is the man that findeth wisdom. She is more precious than rubies: and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her." All this the spiritual mind will at once apply to the fear of the Lord, which is the beginning of wisdom, and perhaps even to Him who of God is made unto us wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption. Indeed, both in the Old and New Testaments—Peter quoting from Isaiah—is Christ compared to a precious corner-stone; and in the glorious Revelation of Jesus Christ, He that sat on the throne in heaven, "was to look upon like a jasper stone and a sardius." (R.V.) But oh!

Thou incomparable Christ, the fairest things of earth fall infinitely short of thy matchless beauty! Heaven itself were shorn of its glory without Thee!

Of all God's creation, the most precious is His new creation, and therefore, when out of Egypt He brings forth a people who are to be His peculiar treasure, it is without surprise that we find the most precious stones, with the names of the tribes engraved thereon by cunning workmanship, used as their symbol in His presence. The jewels themselves had been taken from the Egyptians, and were therefore the more appropriate emblem of the redeemed people. Two onyx stones upon Aaron's shoulders, and twelve glistening stones upon his breast, represented the tribes of Israel in the presence of Jehovah; thus at once showing us the value God sets upon his people, and picturing our Great High Priest devoting the strength of His shoulder, and the love of His heart, to our salvation.

Many attempts, skilful and ingenious, have been made to determine the exact stones used for the High Priest's breastplate, which is twice described in Exodus—chapters twenty-eight and thirty-nine—but each new effort seems only to add to the confusion already existing. The confusion, remember, being not in God's Word, but in the attempts at translation. It is doubtful, for instance, whether

the diamond was used, seeing that the art of engraving this, the hardest of all stones, was only discovered in Europe in the fourteenth century. Of course, it is quite possible that Bezaleel, "filled with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, and in cutting of stones, to set them," may have understood this art also ; but exact knowledge on the subject is not possible, nor indeed is it at all necessary. The great fact is, that the most precious things were used to symbolize the ransomed of the Lord, and the lesson for us, who are chosen of God and redeemed, is that

" The Church, the jewels on His heart
Jesus will ever bear."

For it is the Church, and not the work of the Church, which is in Scripture compared to precious stones. The passage in the third chapter of the First Epistle to the Corinthians, which seems, at first sight, to contradict this view is, on closer scrutiny, one of the strongest evidences of it. Paul, writing to those who are "labourers together with God," states that he, as a wise master-builder, had laid the foundation of the Church—the only foundation which Paul or anyone else ever can lay, Jesus Christ—and others were building thereupon ; he

warns them to take heed how they build ; what sort of people they bring into the Church, and place upon the foundation. Whether, on the one hand, they be true Christians : gold, silver, and precious stones ; or on the other, false ones : wood, hay, stubble. In any case the worker will be saved, but the reward will only be for those who build durable material into the temple of God. So we see that the precious stones here are the *people*, and not the deeds of the people. "YE are God's building."

Again, in the twenty-first chapter of the Revelation the same simile holds good. Here too, the first view may fail to give all the glorious meaning of that rapturous vision of the New Jerusalem. Its jewelled splendour may appear to represent only the abode of God's elect ; but a careful reading of the parallelism of verses nine and ten will make it clear that the city is God's picture, not of the dwelling-place of His people, but of the people themselves. The Apostle was invited to approach and see the Bride, the Lamb's wife. This must mean the Church ; and on that point there is no serious question. But the same angel who promises to show the aged John the Church, takes him to a great and high mountain, and shows him—what? A bride? No. The Church? Yes, but the

Church under the altered symbol of a city. "And there was no temple therein," for the city lying four-square, a perfect cube, was itself a temple, the very Holy of Holies where God dwells. And the temple of the Lord, the temple of the Lord are we! The city, then, is the Church, and once more the precious stones represent the people of God.

The key to the metaphor, thus consistently employed in Scripture, is to be found in the prophecy of Malachi, a prophecy which sketches the history of God's people, even to the great and dreadful day of the Lord. Its burden is of apostasy, the worst feature of which is a querulous denial of it. Ye despise me—wherein have we despised Thee? Ye offer polluted bread—wherein have we polluted Thee? Ye have wearied Him—wherein have we wearied Him? Return—wherein shall we return? Ye have robbed me—wherein have we robbed Thee? I have loved you—wherein hast Thou loved us? Is not this a vivid picture of the present age, in which the sceptical minds of men demand further proof of what is already clearly revealed? But in the midst of abounding degeneracy there were some who feared God, and spake often one to another. "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." Thus, for the fourth time, we discover that God's people are God's jewels.

Having thus established the scripturalness of the symbol, we shall, in the following chapters, trace its appropriateness, both in the science and history of precious stones and pearls. The subject is teeming with interest, and full of incidents illustrative of the position and prospects of those who are called out of darkness into God's marvellous light.

"Sons of Zion, ye are precious in your Heavenly Father's sight,
Ye are His peculiar treasure, ye His jewels of delight ;
Sought and chosen, cleansed and polished, purchased with
transcendent cost,
Kept in His own royal casket, never, never to be lost."



RUBIES.



CHAPTER II.

TOUCHSTONES OF CHARACTER.

CORNELIA'S noble answer to the haughty princess who, on one occasion, visited her, is worthy of remembrance. Proudly displaying her own flashing jewels, her royal guest said, "And where are yours?" upon which the mother of the Gracchi, as proudly calling her children, said, "These are my jewels."*

And He who sits upon the sapphire throne, and has round about Him a rainbow like unto an emerald, and who created all earth's riches for His own pleasure, yet places the highest value on the humble man, who, by faith in Christ Jesus, becomes a son of God,

"Pointing to such, well might Cornelia say,
When the rich casket shone in bright array,
'These are my jewels'; and of such as he
When Jesus spake, well might the language be,
'Suffer these little ones to come to me.'"

* When the Princess Victoria, who is now our gracious Queen, first heard this incident, she remarked to the Duchess of Northumberland, who was teaching her, that she thought these jewels must have been cornelians. So Royalty does not quite annihilate wit. Nor need grace ignore it.

Jewels are *rare*. In comparison with common stones there are very few of them. De la Bruyère says, "Next to sound judgment, diamonds and pearls are the rarest things to be met with." But rarer still are the true children of God. Not one man in fifty the world over is a true Christian: the Church is still a little flock, a remnant according to the election of grace: one here and one there is called, but the world still lieth in the wicked one. And eminent Christians, men and women distinguished for their piety and power, are rarer still. As, after all the search of the ages, there are not now more than one hundred *great* diamonds—a very small number when we think of the efforts put forth to discover them—so those who live the life more abundant, are still in a very meagre minority. Let not this distress us, but rather think that each ransomed soul is worth more than a million worlds, jewels and all.

For jewels are *precious*. "The richest merchandise of all," says Pliny, "and the most sovereign commodity throughout the world, are these pearls." In recent days, for the Arabian Pearl, £140,000 was offered and refused: and almost fabulous sums have been paid even for one precious stone. After the pearl, the ruby is far and away the most valuable, in proportion to its

size; but never being found except in comparatively small fragments, has not had that halo of romance associated with it, which has surrounded some diamonds. For instance, the Great Mogul Diamond, that "meteor amongst gems," which was lost in the Tartar invasion, was valued at £600,000; the Regent of Portugal is worth £400,000; the Orloff, £370,000; the Matan of Borneo, £269,000; the Koh-i-Noor, £140,000; while from Africa alone there come diamonds to the value of £5,000,000 each year. The Talmud contains a legend which shows that in those days there was but one object more valuable than pearls. When on his journey to Egypt, Abraham, aware of the dazzling beauty of his wife, in order that none might behold her, hid her in a chest. When he came to the place of paying custom, the officer said, "Pay custom!" and Abraham replied, "I will pay custom." Then they tried to discover what was in the box, and suggested that he should pay tribute on clothes, gold, fine silk, and at last, as the most costly thing, pearls; to all of which he replied that he would pay custom for them. Then they said, "It cannot be; but open thou the box, and let us see what is therein." So they opened the box, and the whole land of Egypt was illumined by Sarah's beauty, transcending even that of pearls.

In the light of these things let us ponder the value God sets upon His chosen. Nothing is so excellent in the eyes of men, but God compares his people to it. As precious stones are the aristocracy of minerals, Christians are the aristocracy of men. Jeremiah laments because "the precious sons of Zion, comparable to fine gold," have become like stones in the street; and in the Psalms we read, "the redemption of their soul is precious," and "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of His saints." If their death is precious, how much more their life, and how much more the saints themselves! The Father esteemed us of such worth that He gave up His Son to bring us nigh to Himself, and Christ gave His own heart that it might be broken in pieces in order to purchase us. He it was who found the treasure hid in the field, and bought the field for the sake of the treasure, the world for the sake of the Church. He is the merchantman who sold all He had, emptying Himself utterly, that He might possess the coveted pearl.

"For it a price was given,
Nor man, nor angels could have paid,
Nor all the host of heaven."

Jewels, moreover, are *pure*. This, indeed, is the chief part of their value; for the degree of impurity

in any stone is just the measure of its depreciation. The initial act of their formation is separation. "The dark drift of the inland river, or stagnant slime of inland pool and lake, divides or resolves itself, as it dries, into layers of its several elements : slowly purifying each by the patient withdrawal of it from the anarchy of the mass in which it was mingled." Thus begin both the crystallization of the gem and the life of the Christian. "Come out, and be separate! Take forth the precious from the vile," is the call of the Lord to His saints. For our call is to saintliness; and as the unseen foundations of the New Jerusalem are of as precious stones as the dazzling walls, so the part of our life and character which is hidden from the eyes of the world is to be as clear and unsullied as that which all see and admire. Keep thyself pure, thou child of God.

And jewels are *brilliant*. The only difference between a black object and a brilliant one, say between a coal and a diamond, is in their disposal of light. The one receives the light, sucks it up, and selfishly keeps it. It thus becomes black. The other receives the light, but to reflect it back again from a hundred facets. This is the brilliant. And the worldly man, receiving the blessing of God, which He sends upon the just and the unjust,

seeks not the glory of the Great Giver ; while the true child of God getting greater grace, finds his chief end in glorifying God and enjoying Him for ever. "This people," saith the Lord, "I have formed for Myself ; they shall shew forth My praise."

Sometimes we hear of a diamond shining in its own lustre, which is very considerable nonsense, for a diamond has no lustre of its own in which to shine. It is undoubtedly true that there are a few—a very few—diamonds which are phosphorescent for a little while in the dark ; but even this cannot be called the inherent quality of the diamond ; while the vast proportion of both diamonds and other jewels only flash forth in the "infallible lustre of crystalline beauty" when the light shines upon them. And though for many years it was thought that iridescence resided in the pearl, Sir David Brewster has clearly shown that the delicate striations on the pearl's surface are the sole cause of its radiance. Here the analogy lies close at hand. No light have we and no brilliance, no lustre and no grace, until we come into the light of the Lord ; and only as we walk in the light, as He is in the light, have we fellowship one with another ; our lustre undimmed, because the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from all sin.

The aqua-marine, a stone of but inferior value, is much esteemed by some people because it retains its lustre in any light; and it is described as a very curious sight to see the costly sapphire, which somewhat approaches it in appearance, become dim in artificial light—as most sapphires do—while the commoner stone retains its brilliance, flashing as brightly in gaslight as under the sun. God's choicest gifts are not seen in the glare of the world; and though we know Christians who seem to shine as much, and more, in the ways of the world, and in the pomp of society, as they do in the service of God, it is not so with those who have a close intimacy with the Unseen and Eternal. A notable instance of this was McCheyne, who, if not amongst earnest Christians, became silent, and, as people thought, uninteresting; while in communion with God, or in heralding the Gospel, he was a very flame of fire. Of the truly consecrated Church in the world it can almost be said:

“ Oh, she doth teach the torches to burn bright,
And beauty hangs upon the cheek of night;
As a rich jewel in an Ethiop's ear,
Beauty too rich for use, for earth too dear!”

Only as she thus shines, fair as the moon, and clear as the sun, will she be terrible as an army with banners.

And with brilliance there is *beauty*. That is to say, in addition to the beauty of brilliance, there is the beauty of colour and form. Pearls, those emblems of purity, and beauty, and nobility, are esteemed in proportion as they approach to a perfect sphere, and in the degree in which they have their own delightful "orient" or lustre; while nearly every precious stone has its own peculiar tint, the more valuable having a perfect depth of splendour. Even the diamond has generally a light straw shade, or a slight steel blue; but if colourless it yet gives all the colours of light, and blends with the purity of water, the flash of fire. There are a few known diamonds with a deep colour of their own, some rose-tint, some yellow, and there are five which are of a deep blue. The opal, again, has in itself the radiance of the rainbow; viewed from different points it has first the magnificence of one colour, and then the sheen of another. To see what an opal really is, you must visit the Walkley Museum which Mr. Ruskin has established just outside Sheffield. There, in a private case, is an immense opal in the matrix, which, when seen in the sunlight, almost makes the spectator faint with its glory.

"These gems have life in them: their colours speak,
Say what words fail of."

No wonder, therefore, that Solomon "garnished the house with precious stones for beauty," for of all God's fair inanimate creation they are the fairest. But he that is least in the kingdom of heaven is greater than they. The King's daughter is all glorious, and in her robes of glory and beauty is a lovely sight to both men and angels. Let the beauty of our God be upon *us*, O Lord, let the beauty of our God be upon us!

And if the beauty of God, that ornament of a meek and quiet spirit, that glory of an indwelling Saviour, be upon us, what need is there, beloved child of God, for you to deck yourself with earth's trinkets, even though they be beautiful? The sun need not robe himself with stars, though against the dark sky the stars shine brightly; and those who are Heaven's jewels need not tarnish the simplicity of their radiance by wearing the jewels of earth. "Whose adorning, let it not be with gold, or pearls, or costly array, but (which becometh women professing godliness) with good works."

Jewels are *durable*. In a standard work this definition is given:—"A gem is a real possession capable of affording pleasure to the wearer and spectator, and retaining an intrinsic and marketable value, undiminished by the lapse of time." Diamonds outlast dynasties, and seem as if nothing

will impair their lustre. The dewdrop, that "gem of earth and sky begotten," is as beautiful as a diamond, but it is the emblem of goodness that passes away. So gems, and not dewdrops, are chosen to represent the righteous who still hold on their way. Flowers, too, are fair, but how soon they wither! while the Christian, like the bright jewel, has a perpetual beauty.

"Though the same sun, with all-diffusive rays,
Blush in the rose, and in the diamond blaze,
We prize the stronger effort of his power,
And justly set the gem above the flower."

"The Lord forsaketh not His saints: they are preserved for ever."

The seventh quality of perfection in jewels is that they are *useful*. They are used for boring through the rock; for cutting glass; for setting pivots; for pointing watches. But when thus working their beauty is hidden, while it is the triumph of a Christian to be most beautiful when most useful.

Now see how these natural analogies agree with Malachi's spiritual portrait. Those who are God's jewels "feared the Lord"; thus they were precious in His sight. They "thought upon His name," and so became pure. "They spake often one to another," thus reflecting the brilliance of the light

God gave them. They were beautiful amidst a world defiled, and God delighted in them as His special treasure. They were useful, for they were to be spared as a son that serveth. And durable, for, according to the fourth chapter, while the wicked are to be consumed, the righteous shall tread them as ashes under the soles of their feet.

A few years ago, at Raeburn, in Australia, was discovered what is perhaps the most wonderful jewel the world possesses. It was exhibited at the recent Colonial Exhibition, and is unique as it is costly. It has been named "The Southern Cross," after the constellation of that name visible in the southern sky, and consists of nine pearls naturally joined together in the form of a perfect cross. The man who found it was a Roman Catholic, and was so superstitiously afraid, that for months he hid the treasure as too sacred to be sold. Such a jewel may you, my reader, and may I be: not wearing the cross on the bosom, but having it in our heart, and glorying in it, because, by it, we are crucified to the world, and the world unto us. Taking up our cross daily and gladly, and counting it more precious than all earth's gain. Glorying in Christ crucified, unto we become like unto Him. Until these nine precious pearls, the fruit of the One Spirit, shall be fully developed in us, and "love, joy, peace,

long-suffering, gentleness, goodness, faithfulness, meekness, temperance," shall be built up in our character to the praise of the crucified Saviour.

Thus beholding in this jewel-symbol God's ideal for our character, may we daily grow into His likeness; and as old Trapp sums the matter up: "Let us see our dignity, and be thankful; let us see our duty, and be careful."



THE SOUTHERN CROSS PEARL.



CHAPTER III.

EMBLEMS OF ATTAINMENT.

ONE of the most noticeable things about precious stones is their great variety. Their almost endless diversity is an element of unceasing interest both to the merchant and the wearer ; in the one case demanding the keenest vigilance, and in the other giving the constant charm of contrast. Jewels differ in size, in purity, in value, in shape, in colour, and in history, agreeing only in one thing—they are all jewels. Herein we have an emblem of the attainments of God's people, each differing from the other, but all precious in God's sight. Rigid uniformity is not required amongst the saints, they need not be like eggs in a basket, one shape, and size, and colour ; but with varying experiences and gifts, with different phases of grace and knowledge, we can rejoice in our essential unity in Christ Jesus, and recognize, amidst the diversity of operations, the same Spirit.

Even in very early days this variety was recognized. Pliny draws attention to the fact that no two pearls are exactly alike, the greatest difficulty

being found in getting a similar pair : hence the Latin name for them was *unio*—each pearl is unique.

Precious stones differ in size. The largest diamond in the world—five times the size of the next largest—is the Braganza, which belongs to the King of Portugal. If it were of the first water it would be worth £3,000,000—it has even been valued at £58,000,000—but no opportunity has ever been given for a strict examination, and it is probably very impure. Full often it is thus with the Christian men and women who bulk big in the religious world. Much spoken of, and greatly honoured on earth, perhaps some old woman in an attic who serves God without murmuring, is, in His sight, more worthy than they. There is no room for pride in the attainments of the most honoured child of God, neither is there room for despair in the experience of the most humble.

It is a rare thing for a Christian, as it is for a gem, to combine all excellent qualities. Few jewels have more than two or three marks of distinction. If large they are lacking in lustre : if pure they are probably small : if well coloured they may be of an awkward shape : if beautifully formed may not be very heavy. Putting aside the Portuguese diamond

already spoken of, the Orloff, which supports the Russian Eagle, "for size ranks first amongst European gems; in beauty it yields to the Regent; and in romantic interest to the Koh-i-Noor." There are thus wonderful compensations in the Christian life. Take heed that ye despise not one of these little ones which believe in Christ.

The difference in degree of purity affects the value of the gem more than any other quality. Freedom from blemishes is the great test of both jewels and saints. It may be excellent poetry to say that—

" Full many a gem, of purest ray serene,
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear ;"

but, as a practical fact, a perfect jewel is rarely, if ever, met with. Perfection in precious stones is almost unknown, and there are flaws even in the lives of the best Christians. Let it be ours not to seek out the failings of our brethren, but with that charity which thinketh no evil, to cover them, and rejoice rather in their virtues.

Wesley, as is well known, had a great objection to jewellery, especially if worn profusely by professing Christians; but in all his protests against it he ever maintained a spirit of Christian courtesy. Some of his early followers, however, had the same principle without a similar tenderness in their

method of reproof. On one occasion some of his friends accompanied him to a house where they were to be entertained, and amongst the company was a young lady, who, though an attendant upon Mr. Wesley's ministry, was not yet decided for Christ. On her fingers she had several valuable rings; and one of the zealous brethren, ready to bear his testimony against such finery, caught the hand, and holding it up, said, "Mr. Wesley, what do you think of this?" Every one expected a scathing denunciation from the great preacher; instead of which, looking attentively over the table, he appeared not to notice the rings, and said, "It is a beautiful hand." The inconsiderate zeal which prompted to rudeness was thus reproved, while the gentle word did more to achieve the desired purpose than any thunderbolt, for the next time the lady appeared the jewellery was gone. So, while careful not to condemn ourselves by those things we allow, let us be equally anxious not to judge others who have not yet attained to our standard.

"Cast not the clouded gem away,
Quench not the dim, but living ray—
My brother man, Beware.
With that deep voice, which from the skies
Forbade the Patriarch's sacrifice,
God's angel cries, Forbear!"

It is a difficult thing to determine the exact value of a gem. The Spinel and Balas look exactly like the Ruby, which is fifty times as valuable; and Mr. Streeter mentions an instance where rubies handed down as a family heirloom from generation to generation were found not to be rubies at all, but these inferior stones. And man's estimate varies at different times; thus the chrysolite of the ancients, which was highly esteemed amongst them, has quite lost its popular character. Thus, too, is it with the world's verdict on Christians. To-day a teacher is honoured, to-morrow despised. The world rings with his fame this year, next year he will be forgotten, perhaps even calumniated. Or, despised in the midst of his life, he will be honoured when he is gone, as is the case with the Wesleys, who were strongly opposed in their day, by that Church of England, which now, in Westminster Abbey, erects a monument to their memory. So more notably with Bunyan, imprisoned while he was writing those books which are now valued by the godly more than the choicest gems.

But the foundation of God standeth sure having this seal, "the Lord knoweth them that are His." There is no fluctuation in His estimate; whether men praise or blame we may always live in His favour; and in His favour is life.

And if there are different shapes in gems, there are various forms of Christian life and development. And if there are different colours in gems, there are also varieties in the attainments exhibited in personal conduct. And as the precious stones are content to lie side by side, and each be itself, Christian people surely can learn to appreciate other gifts and graces than their own. The topaz need not get more yellow with jealousy because it is not a diamond, nor need the garnet become more red with rage because it is not a ruby. Let them but be a good and beautiful topaz and garnet, and they shall have honour.

Each Christian has his own place and power, and all exhibit the manifoldness of the grace of God. The gentle, tender believers having the graces of the Spirit most fully developed, are like the pearl ; and you will remember that it is the pearls which get the place of honour at the entrance to the New Jerusalem ; most valuable and most perfect, others enter by them. The enthusiastic disciples, full-blooded in their aggressive eagerness, are like the blushing ruby ; while some live so far above earth and earthly things, and so near the sky that they resemble the deep velvety sapphire, "that stone like solid heaven in its blueness." Others with spiritual insight, the seers of the church, are akin to the

most costly chrysoberyl or cat's-eye, with its beautiful moving line of light; while the diamond, "fair as the star which ushers in the morn," is the apt emblem of those who have clear and definite views of truth. Men with a fresh and constant divine life are represented by the emerald with its soft, clear green; and the royal magnificence of exalted Christian character by the purple amethyst. Where there is the rapture of intimate communion with God, we think of the golden jasper; and of the opal, "which hath in it the bright, fiery flame of the carbuncle, the fine refulgent purple of the amethyst, and a whole sea of the emerald's green glory, and everyone of them shining with an incredible mixture, and with much pleasure," where there is the fully developed manhood of faith. While for simplicity, the onyx; and for solidity, the agate is the natural symbol. And if deficient in all these characteristics, there is still the long list of unmentioned jewels, where, without doubt, every true heart may find a place. It may be the blue lapis-lazuli, so much used in Italian churches; or the green malachite, so often met with in Russia; or the turquoise, which finds its home in Persia; or the chrysolite, now called peridot; or the bloodstone, or jade, or tourmaline, or hyacinth, or cairn-gorm, or coral, or crystal, or any other of the score still unnamed.

Isidorus, Bishop of Seville, writing of precious stones in A.D. 630, tells us that each of the Apostles was represented by a different gem; and as the list is very characteristic, it may be given in full:—

“The hard solid jasper, representing the rock of the church, was the emblem of Peter. The bright blue sapphire was emblematic of the heavenly faith of Andrew. The emerald, of the pure and gentle John. The white chalcedony, of the loving James. The friendly sardonyx, of Philip. The red cornelian, of the martyr Bartholomew. The chrysolite, pure as sunlight, of Matthias. The indefinite beryl, of the doubting Thomas. The topaz, of the delicate James the Younger. The chrysoprasus, of the serene and trustful Thaddeus. The amethyst, of Matthew. The pink hyacinth, of the sweet-tempered Simon of Cana.”

It is noticeable in this list that Andrew, of whom not many great deeds are recorded, is represented by the most valuable stone; and a great deal of spiritual keenness is displayed in thus estimating character, for it is probably the people not much heard of, but quietly and unobtrusively useful, who are counted most worthy in God's sight.

Natural temperament very often determines the line of Christian development. A man with a delicate constitution is most likely to display the

gentle side of Christianity ; while the strong and vigorous, other things being equal, should be most energetic and enthusiastic. The ancients in engraving onyx cameos, generally determined the subject of the sculpture by the delicate strata of the onyx itself, and adapted their art to its nature. Even thus works the grace of God, using this man's organizing ability, and that man's eloquence: the "push" of one, and the patience of another ; sanctifying all to the one purpose of showing forth His glory.

An alphabet has been formed of jewels. Thus, Garnet, Opal, and Diamond spell GOD ; and the sweet name of JESUS, in gems, would be Jasper, Emerald, Sapphire, Uranite, and Sardonyx, the initial letters of the stones spelling the name. But in the eyes of those who love Him, the Lord Jesus is fairer than all the sons of men, and they are more precious than all the jewels of earth.

As a final example of the diversity amongst jewels, illustrating the variety amongst Christians, it may be mentioned that early in history each month had a special gem attached to it ; thus the amethyst was worn in February, the emerald in June, the ruby in December, and so on, which may remind us that, with sovereign choice, sometimes God uses one man, when again he is

put aside in favour of another. Let us allow Him, without envy, to use whomsoever He will, and continue to praise His name.

For God's people, differing in character and attainment, must pass through various trainings ere they reach their home. Some, like an African diamond newly discovered, and in a few days passing to a permanent abiding place, known only to those more immediately concerned, reach heaven after a short untroubled existence; others, and most, through much tribulation, enter the kingdom. "A jewel may rest on an English lady's arm that saw Alaric sack Rome, and beheld before—what not? The treasures of the palaces of the Pharaohs and of Darius, or of the camp of the Ptolemies; came into Europe on the neck of a vulgar pro-consul's wife, to glitter at every gladiator's butchery in the amphitheatre; then passed in a Gothic ox-waggon to an Arab seraglio at Seville; and so back to its native India to figure in the peacock throne of the Great Mogul; to be bought by an Armenian for a few rupees from an English soldier; and so at last come hither."

The history of the Great Mogul Diamond, which has no end, is only eclipsed by the history of the Koh-i-Noor, which has no beginning. For five centuries and a-half it can be traced back

without a broken link. Where it came from, or who discovered it, no one knows. Belonging to the Rajah of Malwa, at the earliest glimpse of its history gives us, it was taken from him by his conquerer, Ala-ed-din, who in his turn lost it to Sultan Berber, a direct descendant of Tamerlane; and then it was so much thought of "that a judge of diamonds valued it at half the daily expenses of the whole world." Finding its way, by gift or purchase, back into the hands of the Great Mogul dynasty, it remained there, until, in 1739, Nadir Shah, from Persia, conquered Aurung-Zeb.

As usual, the jewels changed hands, and thinking he now possessed all, Nadir concluded a treaty with his fallen foe. But the Koh-i-Noor was missing, and Nadir was informed by a woman of the harem that the Emperor wore it concealed in his turban. Unable to quarrel after such a recently-concluded peace, the Persian conquerer had to resort to artifice to secure the treasure. Availing himself of a time-honoured custom, at a public ceremony he suggested that, as a sign of peace, he and the Great Mogul Emperor should change turbans, and giving no time for reflection, he took off his own sheep-skin head-dress, glittering with costly gems, and replaced it by the Emperor's turban, which, though not looking so valuable, yet concealed this priceless stone.

With Oriental self-command, the Emperor betrayed his chagrin and surprise by no outward sign, so that Nadir feared for a moment he had been misled. Withdrawing to his tent, he unfolded the turban, and discovered with selfish delight the long-coveted treasure. His first exclamation was "Koh-i-Noor!" meaning Mountain of Light, and this name the stone has borne ever since.

The magnificent diamond was then passed on from Shah to Shah. Once built into a prison wall, the plaster fell off, and against its sharp apex an official scratched his hand, leading to its discovery anew. Passing again from hand to hand, and once almost presented to the temple of Juggernaut, it was, in 1849, at the final annexation of the Punjaub, confiscated to the East India Company, who determined to present it to the Queen. It was given to our noble Lawrence to guard, but he, taken up with the cares of the mighty empire, put the stone in his vest pocket, and forgot all about it, until some days afterwards, when asked for it, in order that Lord Dalhousie might take it to England, he remembered that since that day he had not worn the particular waistcoat he had on when the Koh-i-Noor came into his possession. After a fevered search the garment in question was found thrown into a corner, where it had lain for days, within the reach of hundreds

of people, and the Koh-i-Noor was in one of its pockets!

Safely in England at length, it was presented to Her Majesty; was, after a while, re-cut; and is now kept at Windsor, while a model of it is in the Tower of London. It is justly considered the greatest gem in England, and as such, deserves full mention; and as it depends as much on its history as its weight, it might serve to remind us that Christian attainments are generally the result of a patient training and discipline.

Comparing the saints to precious stones, it is difficult to think of the Koh-i-Noor without associating it with the Apostle Paul, who led such a varied and troubled life in his Master's service, but who now shines resplendent in his Master's crown. He passed from kingdom to kingdom, as the Koh-i-Noor did; he was in prison as it was; was tortured as its possessors were; and again thrown aside for a while; yet from the Roman Coliseum he found his way to the Royal Palace of the King. Others have followed in his steps, as Xavier and Livingstone, and many more. Of such as these the world was not worthy; of such as these God only knows the worth.



CHAPTER IV.

FACETS OF GRACE.

GOD only knows the worth of such jewels as these, we have said, and it is true. For it is His grace which gives them their value ; and the grace which thus enriches and ennobles them is still further displayed in giving them a position of honour, of delight, of influence, and of perfect safety.

In Christ Jesus, God brings us *near to Him*. Those who have jewels wear them, and thus they become almost a part of themselves. Kings delight to don their royal regalia. And we who sometimes were far off are made nigh by the blood of Christ. He died for us that He might bring us to God.

“So near, so very near to God, nearer we cannot be ;
For in the person of His Son we are as near as He.”

We are brought near to Him that we might be *a glory to Him*. The promise to Israel is for us, “Thou shalt be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord.” In the salvation of His people God’s glory shines forth as it does nowhere else. Great

gems of the earth are named "Mountain of Light," "Mountain of Splendour," "Sea of Glory," "Sun of the Sea," "Crown of the Moon," "Moon of Mountains," to show forth their magnificent brilliance. Shah Jehan had a throne worth £3,000,000, worked in gems into the form of a peacock, and so great was his son's admiration for it, that when he became Emperor he took the name of Aurungzeb, which means "Ornament of the Throne." So gorgeous was it that his greatest glory came from it, even though it all belonged to him. And such glory can God cause to flow from His people that He delights to be associated with them. He is the God of Abraham, the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. And He is the God and Father of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, who says concerning us, "The glory which thou gavest Me I have given them; that they may be one, even as We are one." Oh! the height and depth of the marvel!

Amongst the myths of the ancients none was more surely believed than that some gems were living. Diamonds and pearls were supposed to be capable of reproducing themselves; while in Burmah, even to this day, it is an article of faith that rubies ripen, being first yellow, then green, then blue, then red. The most curious exemplification of this idea is the various virtues attached to

precious stones. The amethyst was supposed to be a specific against drunkenness; and nothing drunk out of an amethyst cup could intoxicate. Even Jerome solemnly declared that the sapphire secured the favour of princes, disarmed enemies, baffled the wizard's power, liberated captives, and appeased the wrath of God Himself. Carbuncles were supposed to neutralize poisons; jasper would cure fevers; agates ministered to defective eyesight. Cicero had a ring which was supposed to make him eloquent. Edward the Confessor had one which cured epilepsy. Even to-day, in Russia, there is a proverb that, "A turquoise given by a loving hand carries with it happiness and good fortune. The diamond was certainly credited with an immense influence in love affairs, but its chief merit was that it brought dominion and power to anyone who possessed it. In this material age we imagine that it is dominion which brings diamonds, rather than the reverse; but that the contrary idea was strongly held is shown by the answer which Shah Shuja gave when Rungit, to whom he had been compelled to deliver the Koh-i-Nûr, asked, "At what price do you value it?" "At good luck," was the answer, "for it has ever been the associate of him who has vanquished his foes." And in this cultured, educated nineteenth century, in

so-called Christian England, you will find very few ladies who will wear an opal, because, forsooth, it is unlucky! Great is the power of superstition.

Some would thus translate the meaning of the twelve foundations of the Holy City, descending out of heaven from God, as each one referring specially to some particular virtue. Canon Wilberforce expounds "the twelfth, an amethyst," as teaching the needed lesson of total abstinence, since it had that significance amongst the ancients. If some competent hand would tell us what the other foundations teach it would be very interesting, but very inconclusive. To begin with, the emerald would certainly typify chastity, since, among the ancients, it was believed that if anyone wore an emerald on his finger, and transgressed the law of purity, immediately the emerald would fly in pieces, from innate antipathy. Without giving such rein to fancy, we can meditate on the influence which each one of us, if we be God's jewels, can exert in the world. It is no myth that we are living: yea, we have the life which is life indeed! No myth that we can propagate our faith, and that through the witness and glory of one Christian, by God's Spirit, others may be fashioned! No myth that the grace of God, through even the humblest believer, can stay many an earth-plague, and bring

not only power, but joy! These are no cunningly-devised fables, nor old wives' tales. Let us see to it, then, that our grace leads to graces, our gem-germ to growth, and our glory to the regeneration of other souls.

"Where your treasure is, there will your heart be also." May we reverently say that where God's treasure is there will His heart be also? We are *loved by Him*, for we are His jewels, His peculiar treasure, as the margin has it in Malachi. His heart is with His people; He delights in them; He rests in His love. "The steps of a good man are ordered by the Lord, and He delighteth in his way."

And we are *kept by Him* through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed; in the cabinet and casket of the church here, and in the Book of Remembrance there. None are ever to be lost. "They shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand. My Father, which gave them Me, is greater than all; and no man is able to pluck them out of My Father's hand." This does not imply a transfer from the hand that keeps to the hand that gave, for immediately our Saviour adds, "I and My Father are one." Hezekiah made himself treasuries for precious stones and pleasant jewels, but the Lord Jesus is himself the

treasury wherein no harm can reach us. The name of the Lord is a strong tower, the righteous runneth into it and is safe.

In the case of men, even the most vigilant, treasures may be lost. Had we to keep ourselves, there were little hope of our ultimate salvation. In the Patriarchal Cathedral, in the Kremlin, at Moscow, there is a costly picture of the Virgin, in the frame of which is £45,000 worth of gems. A devout worshipper, lately, in kissing it, bit off an emerald, and carried it away. A greater robbery took place with the Orloff diamond, which once formed one of the eyes of an idol in a temple at Seringham, in Mysore. A French grenadier, assuming the character of a native devotee at length managed to get appointed to guard the inner shrine, and on a stormy night, wrenching the diamond from its place, he escaped. But no might of the adversary shall be able to wrest God's elect from His grace. The Evil One may indeed assume the guise of an angel of light, and he may almost have us within his power, but united to Jesus we shall be safe. "He that toucheth you toucheth the apple of His eye."

Before Governor Pitt disposed of the diamond which bears his name, and which he brought from India, he never slept two consecutive nights in the

same house, and no one knew beforehand what his movements would be. So fearful was he of losing the jewel, which he eventually sold for £135,000, and which is now valued in France at £480,000, and so careful can men be of what they esteem.

One Nonius had an opal worth £20,000, which he greatly prized, and when Marc Antony gave him his choice of giving up his gem or being banished, he preferred exile with the opal, rather than life in Rome without it.

And Shah Rokh endured many horrible tortures, rather than give up the Koh-i-Noor when in his possession. His eyes were put out, so that its brilliancy could no longer delight them, still he kept it hidden; and though at length a circle of paste was put around his shaven head, and boiling oil poured into the receptacle thus formed, he did not yield it up.

Now, soul, listen. Will men thus put themselves to inconvenience, will men thus embrace exile, will men thus endure torture, rather than lose their prized jewel, and will not He, who delights in His people, keep that which they have committed unto Him against that day? Yea, verily.

That the safety of God's jewels may be further enforced by illustration, the following account is transcribed from the work of the traveller, J. H. Kohl,

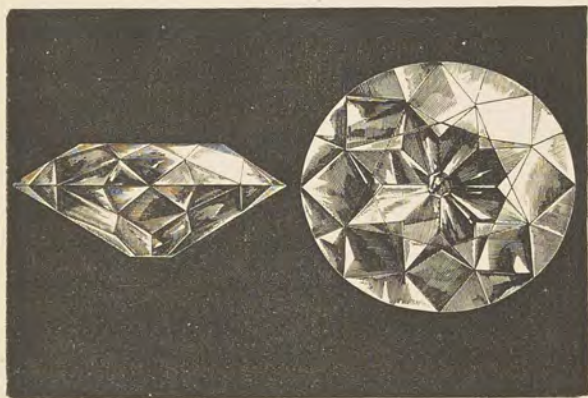
on Russia :—" Some time before I went to Moscow, there died in a convent, whither he had retreated, after the manner of the wealthy pious ones of his nation, a rich merchant, whose house had large establishments in Moscow, Constantinople and Alexandria, and extensive connections throughout the East. Feeling the approach of age, he had by degrees given up the toils of business to his sons. His wife was dead, and the only beloved object, which, even in the cloister, was not divided from him, was one large, beautiful oriental pearl. This precious object had been purchased for him by some Persian or Arabian friend at a high price, and enchanted by its water, magnificent size and colour, its perfect shape and lustre, he would never part with it, however enormous the sum offered for it. Perhaps in the contemplation of its peerless beauty, as it lay before him in his leisure hours, he recalled the events of his early life, and the glories of the East, as he had formerly beheld them with his own eyes. He fairly worshipped the costly globule. He himself occupied an ordinary cell in the convent, but this object of his love was bedded on silk, in a golden casket. It was shown to few ; many favourable circumstances, and powerful recommendations were necessary to obtain such a favour. One of my Moscow friends, who had

succeeded in introducing himself, and had received a promise that he should behold the *Pearl of Pearls*, informed me of the style and manner of the ceremony. On the appointed day he went with his friends to the convent, and found the old man awaiting his guests at a splendidly covered breakfast, in his holiday clothes. Their reception had something of solemnity about it. The old man afterwards went into his cell and brought out the casket in its rich covering. He first spread a piece of white satin on the table, and then, unlocking the casket, let the precious pearl roll out before the enchanted eyes of the spectators. No one dared to touch it, but all burst into acclamations, and the old man's eyes gleamed like his pearl. It was, after a short time, carried back to its hiding-place. During his last illness, the old humorist never let his pearl out of his hand, and after his death it was with difficulty taken from his stiffened fingers. It found its way afterwards to the Imperial Treasury." Such is the most interesting account of the care taken by this old man of the treasure upon which he had set his heart. But He who dieth no more for ever, has laid up *His* treasure where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. His treasure is His people.

One more picture of grace and safety. The Sancy Diamond, which was once in the regalia of England, and which was carried by James II. to France, and afterwards worn at the coronation of Louis XV., has had a curious history. Owned by Count de Sancy, it was borrowed by Henry IV. of Navarre, to send to the Swiss Government, as a pledge for the pay of the Swiss Guards, and was given into the hand of a trusty servant, who was waylaid by highwaymen and murdered. But they could not find the treasure for which they committed their deed of violence. After strict search the body of the servant was found concealed in a forest, and it was then discovered that rather than lose the gem entrusted to him, *he had swallowed it*, making his own body the casket, in which he kept it secure, and laying down his life for its safety. Here let us learn that "our life is hid with Christ in God"; that He who once laid down His life to purchase us ever liveth to shield us; that sin cannot claim us, for He has conquered sin; that the world cannot be victorious, for He has overcome the world; that the devil cannot triumph over us, for He has defeated the devil; that we may be "persuaded, that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth,

nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord." He will keep his own until—

“Like the stars of the morning,
His bright crown adorning,
They shall shine in their beauty,
Bright gems for His crown.”



EDGE.

FACE.

KOH-I-NOOR.



CHAPTER V.

ANALOGIES OF NATURE.

SOME who have read the former chapters, wherein have been traced the excellency and glory of God's people, may perhaps sadly have to confess that they are not yet amongst the number ; that they neither fear the Lord, nor think upon His name ; that they have not yet been brought nigh, nor received His beauty. Let such, if they desire to be amongst the chosen, be cheered ; for jewels were not always precious, whether gems of earth, or children of God. Once those were common elements ; once these were heirs of wrath, even as others. Only grace has made them to differ, and the same grace is available for all who will accept it. And though you may only be like a pebble on the sea shore, ready to be swallowed up, or a common stone on the street, perpetually being trampled down, " I say unto you, that God is able of these stones to raise up children unto Abraham."

In the crystallization of precious stones, and the formation of pearls, there are many striking analogies of the work of conversion in the soul, when

the natural man is transformed into the spiritual, and as really changed as when flint, clay, carbon, or mud becomes a gem of value or a pearl of price.

The basis of some gems is *flint*. Amethyst, jasper, and onyx, for instance, are almost wholly composed of this material, with an infinitesimal quantity of colouring matter added. The silica of the hard flinty rock is taken, and by the wondrous power of crystallization is changed into these beautiful jewels. But a more marvellous change takes place when those who "made their hearts as an adamant stone, lest they should hear the law," become broken by the Word of God, which is as a hammer that breaketh the rock in pieces; fused by that same word, which is as a fire; and transformed by the Spirit of God, until the heart that was hard and haughty, becomes tender and contrite. This indeed, is a miracle of grace. And grace still further causes them, when changed, to be as determined in God's cause, as formerly they were in the cause of evil. They set their face like a flint, and do not fear. "Hearken to me, ye that follow after righteousness, ye that seek the Lord: look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the hole of the pit whence ye are digged." "Where is boasting, then? It is excluded." Look upon the stiff-necked, flinty-

conscienced evil doers of the earth, and be humbled, for such were some of you until the mercy of God met with you, and the power of the Highest overshadowed you. Even the sinner with hardest heart need not despair, if he will but trust the grace of God. Nought else can effect the change, neither resolutions, vows, nor tears. It would take a great deal of washing to change a flint into a jasper.

The opal, too, resplendent in the glories of the most precious gems, is only flint and water. And the agate is composed of particles of flinty sand deposited on the decaying branch of a tree, which in former ages fell into the mire. Atom by atom the woody fibre perished, and atom by atom the flint took its place—now yellow, now grey, now black—till at last the stones, with the shape, the rings, the knots, and the wavy lines of the wood were perfect. Thus perishing men, sunken in sin, are transformed. The old lines of character are still there; the soul's identity is not destroyed—but though he is the same man, he is quite different. Instead of the perishing soul, there is now the incorruptible spirit; and eternal life instead of decaying manhood.

Other precious stones are formed from *clay*. The ruby, most valuable of all; the sapphire, oriental

emerald, oriental topaz, and other oriental gems are corundums, that is, they have their basis in clay and only differ in their colouring pigments. How great the change from the common clay which we tread under foot, to the dazzling ruby which we put in our royal crowns! Beholding its refulgent beauty, and remembering its base origin, the reverent soul is compelled to exclaim, "What hath God wrought!" But this transformation pales into insignificance before the grander outcome of God's power, when He takes the weak things of the earth, and things despised, to fashion of them the heirs of glory.

"I waited patiently for the Lord; and He inclined unto me, and heard my cry. He brought me up also out of a horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock, and established my goings." He took us from the clay when we were nothing but lumps of clay ourselves, and worked the miracle of regeneration, changing us into precious stones, which, now placed on that Corner Stone, which He hath established in Zion, elect and much more precious, shall show forth His praise for ever in the temple which groweth daily towards completion. "Now, O Lord, Thou art our Father; we are the clay, and Thou our Potter; and we all are the work of Thy hand."

Again, the diamond is only crystallized *carbon*. Not only fallen wood as in the agate, but wood that has actually been burnt. Yet from this the power of God fashions the clearest and hardest gem. Who can fathom His creative skill?

“Diamonds are made of soot ; and I know not
How, when, or where, amid the charred remains
Of burnt-out hearts, God’s silent power steps in,
And gives the crystallizing touch that makes
The diamond flash out of the thick black ash ;
But who dare say that this thing cannot be ?”

On the authority of God’s word we dare say that this thing can be ; nay, is. Thousands, to-day, who once were great sinners, have by earnest souls “with fear pulling them out of the fire,” been rescued. One who was saved from great sin went to visit an extensive laboratory, where, amongst other things, he was told for the first time this wonderful fact, that diamonds are only crystallized carbon. Very much astonished, and with a quick eye to see an apt simile, he enquired—

“Can you change a diamond into carbon ?”

“Oh, yes, easily ; we have only to subject it to a very high and protracted temperature, and it will be reduced to carbon.”

“And can you change a piece of carbon into a diamond ?”

"No ; nobody can do that."

"I think I know somebody who can."

"I am sure you don't."

"I am sure I do."

"Who is it?"

"The Lord Jesus Christ," was the quaint, unexpected answer, "for so many years ago He took me, a firebrand plucked out of the burning, and He made me a diamond fit for His own crown !"

It is even so. The greatest sinners often become the choicest saints. They love much who are much forgiven ; and because the Lord desires this fervent love, He delights to take up the worst of men, who when forgiven and changed will render it. He who can make diamonds of carbon can turn the vilest creatures into pure, Christ-like men and women. Never lose hope of any one ; none are too low for Christ to raise them. If sunken yourself let Him lay hold of you by His grace : if yourself already rescued, look not so much on the vice and vileness of your fellows as on the vision of what they may be if you with gentle, winning love lead them to the Saviour.

Sir Humphry Davy was the first who absolutely proved that diamonds had a purely vegetable origin. This, however, was not that result of his life-work, which gave him most joy, for

after enumerating his various discoveries he was wont to exclaim: "But the greatest of all my discoveries is Michael Faraday." Finding Faraday a poor apprentice to a bookbinder, he had helped him, until at length in scientific renown he far outshone his patron. He had found what Diogenes looked for in vain—a man. And many a man who is now impure and debased, and many a woman, might easily be reached, and if only they were touched by the transforming power of God's salvation, these firebrands would be changed, until presently they would gleam and glisten with the glamour of God's glory. Saints are glorified carbon, that is all.

Not only negatively bad things, but positively poisonous ones are made into jewels. The poet's fable, "That from the maiden's lips fall diamonds," has, after all, a basis in fact, for carbonic acid gas thus out-breathed is really the vaporised material from which diamonds are fashioned. Diamonds from poison! Saints from the very smoke of the pit! The age of miracles has not ceased.

Only God can effect this change. With flint from steel man can strike fire; with clay he fashions many vessels, can even make bricks and build whole cities; with carbon points or threads he can display the brilliant electric light; but no man can

change flint into jasper, or clay into ruby, or carbon into diamond. And man can do wonders with his fellow-man. He can educate, elevate, and refine him; he can advance him socially and mentally, even morally; he can exalt him to rank and power. Man can do this with man; but no man can make another a Christian. That is solely God's prerogative. When we see flinty hearts softened and made ductile; when we see debased men taken from the pit; and when we see abandoned men snatched from the fire, we are forced to exclaim: "This is the Lord's doing; it is marvellous in our eyes!" Marvellous! marvellous! These things the angels desire to look into.

In speaking of the origin of the pearl we are at once in the region of poetic fancy. For centuries it was supposed that this beautiful rounded jewel was formed from a drop of rain falling into an oyster, where it straightway congealed into a pearl. And upon this theory many of the old pearl legends and poems are founded:

"A little particle of rain,
That from a passing cloud descended,
Was heard thus idly to complain:—
'My brief existence now is ended—
Outcast alike of earth and sky,
Useless to live, unknown to die.'

It chanced to fall into the sea ;
And there an open shell received it ;
And, after years, how rich was he
Who from its prison house relieved it !
That drop of rain had formed a gem
Fit for a monarch's diadem."

And so in fable, the outcast rain on the verge of perishing, being transformed, found itself at last in a royal crown ; the spiritual counterpart of which is happily no fable, but a most blessed reality, as full many a sinner fallen from heaven, and almost swallowed up in sin's surging sea, but who came into contact with the transforming power, can testify.

Another notion almost as largely received, attributed the pearl to the distilling dew ; and, strange to say, this opinion, widely current in the East, was also found by Columbus to be entertained in the West. Gotthold, in his "Emblems," says : "The pearl, as most naturalists inform us, is the product of the dew of heaven, for when the oyster sees the weather bright and clear it is said to open its shell at the early dawn, while the dew is falling, and greedily to drink in the silver drops, which petrify within it, and afterwards by their white and snowy lustre betray their celestial origin." "By the Divine dew" was the motto of a Venetian family ; and

upon this text, in the days of yore, many a sermon was preached, urging those whose life originates in the dew of God's Spirit to shew forth on earth their heavenly calling.

A third idea was that pearls were formed from angels' tears, wept over those in special circumstances of sorrow; and much poetry has been written on this phase of the subject:

“And precious the tear, as the rain from the sky,
Which turns into pearl as it falls in the sea.”

Gotthold meditates on it after this fashion:—“My pearls shall be my tears. Give me grace to shed them for sorrow at my sins, for joy at Thy goodness, and for desire after Thy heavenly felicity, and I shall ask for no other pearls.”

But in truth, instead of having a celestial origin, *mud, sand, or weed* is the beginning of the pearl. Specimens have been discovered with mud in the centre; others, on being opened, have been found to be discoloured by the weed which, once there, had evidently decayed. By the wash of the water the foreign body becomes deposited in the shell, and the oyster to escape the irritation which it causes, covers it with a film of pearly substance, and again another, until, like a bulb with many films it is completely encysted. An absolute proof of this

fact is given when the natives in China artificially introduce a pellet, or an image of Buddha into the shell of a river fish, and thus compel it to transform them into pearls, as is often done—

“Where the shell irks him, or the sea-sand frets,
There, from some subtle organ, he doth shed
This lovely lustre o'er his grief, and gets
Peace, and the world his labour,—being dead.”

Here let us pause with reverence before Him who gave the instinct to that fish, which, in its little world, from pollution or irritation, creates the most valued of all jewels. And before the mystery of earth's sin and suffering let us bow our head, while our heart is gladdened by the thought that from the sin and the discord of the world the living Spirit can fashion a holiness and a harmony which shall by-and-by form the gates into the Golden City.

But not without pain of heart in some, and wild commotion of soul in others, is the change from nature to grace effected. The pearl is not without the prior friction, nor the precious stone without throes and agonies, of which we can have no conception, when, fused in the lambent flame, it knits together into its crystal beauty. So neither could there be salvation without suffering: nor can there be holiness without conflict. Then comes the separation of peace.

Agglomerated in our large cities are myriads of people whom we are in the habit of barbarously talking of as "the masses," and seeking falsely to reach them. As *masses* they will never be reached ; but if we separate them into individuals, and seek to bring them face to face with God, we may have hope of them. For it is singly and separately that they, and that we, must be touched by His grace. John Ruskin, in "Ethics of the Dust," gives, in his glowing language, a fine illustration of the way in which the vilest may become the most beautiful. Throwing ourselves on his indulgence, we will quote the whole passage :—"Exclusive of animal decay, we can hardly arrive at a more absolute type of impurity than the mud or slime of a damp, over-trodden path, on the outskirts of a manufacturing town. I do not say mud of the road, because that is mixed with animal refuse ; but take merely an ounce or two of the blackest slime of a beaten footpath on a rainy day, near a manufacturing town. The slime we shall find, in most cases, composed of clay (or brick-dust, which is burnt clay), mixed with soot, a little sand and water. All these elements are at helpless war with each other, and destroy reciprocally each other's nature and power ; competing and fighting for place at every tread of your foot ; sand squeezing out clay,

and clay squeezing out water, and soot meddling everywhere and defiling the whole. Let us suppose that this ounce of mud is left in perfect rest, and that its elements gather together like to like, so that their atoms may get into the closest relations possible.

“Let the clay begin. Ridding itself of all foreign substance it gradually becomes a white earth, already very beautiful and fit with help of congealing fire to be made into finest porcelain, and painted on, and kept in kings’ palaces. But such artificial consistence is not its best; leave it still quiet to follow its own instinct of unity, and it becomes not only white, but clear; not only clear, but hard; not only clear and hard, but so set that it can deal with light in a wonderful way, and gather out of it the loveliest blue rays only, refusing the rest. We call it then a sapphire.

“Such being the consummation of the clay, we give similar permission of quiet to the sand. It also becomes, first, a white earth; then proceeds to grow clear and hard, and at last arranges itself in mysterious, infinitely fine parallel lines, which have the power of reflecting, not merely the blue rays, but the blue, green, purple, and red rays in the greatest beauty in which they can be seen through any hard substance whatever. We call it then an opal.

“In next order the soot sets to work. It cannot make itself white; but instead of being discouraged tries harder and harder and comes out clear at last, and the hardest thing in the world; and for the blackness that it had, obtains in exchange the power of reflecting all the rays of the sun at once in the vividest blaze that any solid thing can shoot. We call it then a diamond.

“Last of all the water purifies or unites itself; contented enough if it only reach the form of a dew-drop; but if we insist on its proceeding to a more perfect consistence, it crystallizes into the shape of a star. And for the ounce of slime which we had by political economy of competition, we have, by political economy of co-operation, a sapphire, an opal, and a diamond, set in the midst of a star of snow.”

Then take thou a handful of the city mud, separate man from man in your help. Discriminate between cases, and bring all under the power of the grace of the Gospel, rightly dividing the word of truth to their necessities. Mighty transformations will be the result. But we will speak of this in the next chapter.



CHAPTER VI.

SIMILES OF SACRIFICE.

NO man ever yet saw the wonderful processes of crystallization forming from common materials the lovely forms of beauty displayed in precious stones. But, even as in the unseen regeneration of the soul, we know that the change does take place *by the result*. Mysterious indeed and incapable of imitation, yet the spiritual conversion, like the material crystallization, has been attested in all ages by its effects. If *this* change clay to ruby, and carbon to diamond, *that* changes the earth-born into the heavenly-minded, and the sin-blackened into the saintly pure. We speak that we do know, and testify that we have seen, so that in this we are wholly scientific.

If any man objects that *he* has not seen these things, the reason probably is that he has not sought them. Most likely the reader of these lines has never found a precious stone; but no one would therefore affirm that precious stones have not been discovered. God's jewels, both of earth and heaven, are generally hidden until by patient

and continued search they are brought from the bowels of the earth, or from the depth of the sea.

“Errors, like straws, upon the surface flow ;
He who would search for pearls must dive below.”

But in vain would any man dive in the Atlantic Ocean to discover pearls, for the Cape of Good Hope on the one side, and Cape Horn on the other, seem to be effectual barriers confining the pearl-oyster to the Pacific and Indian Oceans. And in vain would any man dig for diamonds in Europe, for they have never been discovered here. So the first art in finding jewels is to know the sea or country where they probably exist. India, Brazil, or Africa for diamonds ; New Granada, Upper Egypt, or the Ural Mountains for emeralds ; Burmah for rubies ; Bavaria for amethysts, and so on. One of the reasons why Julius Cæsar invaded Britain was his hope of gaining pearls, which were thought to exist in this country, as indeed they do to a small extent, especially in the river Conway, near Llanrwst. But many places have false reputations, liable to lead the searchers astray, and much care and wisdom is necessary. The news comes that the famous mines of Golconda are at length exhausted, the curious thing about which is that there were never any mines at Golconda, that

only being the name of the market where the gems of the district were sold.

Enough has been said to make it clear that jewels are not to be found in all countries, nor in any countries at all times; and this fact bears its lesson of Christian service. The Lord Jesus sent His disciples into all places whither He Himself would come; and it is truly wise of the spiritual worker to put forth most effort, not only in the most needy district, but in that part of the needy district where the Lord most clearly prepares the way. Where the Divine Spirit is at work overturning false faiths, and causing men to yearn for better things, is a far more likely field than where death and indifference reign. Would to God that British Christians were only wise enough not to spend so much of their strength on the home fields, already overworked in comparison with those other dark lands where the Lord has much people, already feeling for God if haply they might find Him!

Within recent years there has been a great rush of miners to the diamond fields of South Africa, and a rich reward has followed their toil. For hundreds of years those precious stones had been hidden, which, now brought to light, attract the gaze of the whole world. Yet in 1750, there was

published a MISSION MAP of Griqualand West, and across it was written, "*Here be diamonds.*" That testimony was not, however, believed, and the diamond seachers were so engrossed with the stones of India and Brazil, that no practical effort was even made to test the value of the new country. This was a mission map remember, a mission map unheeded. And truth to tell, and tell sadly, this is not the only mission map met thus with a sceptical, or even a scornful reception. The incredulous Church listerns apathetically to the amazing story of what God has wrought among the heathen nations. Where before was only blackness and despair in Fiji, in Telegoo, in Congo Country, and many more, it is now truly said, "*Here be diamonds,*" and the call is for more labourers. Will not some at home, who are digging and digging and digging, spending their strength for nought, speed to these places where there is much land yet to be possessed? Probably some of the mission fields will yield the great jewel harvest of the future. When we get disheartened with our spiritual Golcondas, we will heed the promise of our Griqualands, and, getting to work in earnest, will mourn over our past neglect. In one year, when diamonds were discovered at Bahia, in South America, there were 25,000 people who

flocked into what before was an uninhabited region. Let us hope that the near future may find a mission "rush" of equal dimensions, in eager search after those whom God counts very precious.

Compared with the enterprise of those who seek precious stones, the Church may well be ashamed of the spasmodic efforts she puts forth; and all our talk of the hardships and the difficulty of our service becomes positive trifling when we think of the danger and discomfort men have endured, and do endure, in the search for earth's gems.

"Ocean's gem, the purest
Of Nature's works! What days of weary journeyings,
What sleepless nights, what toils on land and sea,
Are borne by men to gain thee!"

For pearls, men will brave the attacks of shark and saw-fish, and shorten their lives by the excessive strain of frequent diving: for diamonds, men will leave homes of comfort, and, camping far beyond the reach of civilisation, count themselves happy if they get the means of sustaining life at I know not how many times the proper price: for rubies, men will follow in the wake of an invading army, as in Burmah, and shrink not from the peril of savage dacoits: and shall it be said that we who seek for souls as those who must give account

to God are less in earnest? No. We must learn to endure hardness in this world, if we wish, in that, to shine forth as the stars.

Nay more, we must learn to renounce the world; and as the seekers for gems make everything bend to their one absorbing purpose, and live only for that, we must learn to pass through things temporal with our heart set all the time on things eternal. Thus shall we be willing to lose our lives that we may hereafter find them, and to sacrifice ourselves that others may be blessed. When it was discovered that Kimberley, in South Africa, was over a diamond mine, immediately the people began to pull down their houses; in a week the place was in ruins, and every foot of land sold for fabulous sums. And when a Dutch Boer found a diamond in the mud wall of his house, his house was very soon demolished, and the "pan" from which he got the mud answered to the anxious search which then began, by yielding some of the finest stones Africa has produced. Thus present comfort is sacrificed for future gain, and the world applauds the wisdom of those who are willing to lose farm and home to find diamonds. Why, then, should it be counted a strange thing if the Christian is willing to lose the world that he may gain, not only his own soul, but the souls of his fellows? The angels applaud

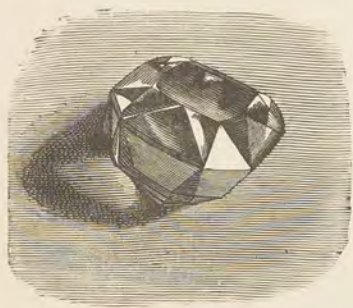
such far-sighted sacrifice, and God smiles approval on his willing servant.

When Mahmoud the conqueror of India, who in every place broke in pieces the idols of the people, came to Sunnat, he found there a gigantic and most beautiful image, fifteen feet high. The inhabitants besought him to spare their god, and offered an enormous ransom. But Mahmoud proudly replied that he would be known as the image-breaker, and not as the image-seller, and, raising his mace, he struck the idol a heavy blow, as the sign for his soldiers to complete its destruction. When it was broken, there rolled out before the astonished iconoclast a perfect shower of diamonds, and rubies, and emeralds—three bushels in all—and thus in breaking the idol he was far more greatly enriched than he would have been by its ransom. And if those of Christ's people who yet cherish some idol—it may be perhaps only a little thing—only knew what riches of grace, and what wealth of blessing in service, would be theirs by its sacrifice, they would not hesitate to rain upon it the effectual blows of an earnest renunciation, until in its ruins they would find an equipment of power for their warfare in the world, which would result in many souls being won for the Redeemer's diadem.

For as nothing on earth can compensate for the loss of the soul, nothing on earth can compensate for the loss of the unction of the Holy One, without which we seek jewels for the Lord's crown in vain. The fainting Arab in the desert, seeking water, presses towards the glittering object in the distance, in the hope that this is at length a spring at which he may quench his thirst. Scarce able to crawl so far, he reaches the spot only to find he was mistaken, and flinging the mocking object from him as he lies down to die, exclaims, "Only pearls!" Costly as they would have been under other circumstances, they were absolutely valueless without that which would sustain life, and they would gladly have been exchanged for a drink of water. And of what value shall those things of the world be if we barter for them the life of our own soul, or the power to lead to life another?

Of the things we have spoken in this chapter concerning our service in the world this is the sum. To win souls from the world for Christ we must first go where there are most to win, and then be willing to renounce earth's comfort for heaven's blessedness, earth's treasures for the greater riches of Christ, even earth's jewels for the vastly more glorious, more enduring, and more precious jewels of God. The sister of the Queen of Sweden, the

Princess Eugenie, for whom in her own country everyone has a word of praise, feeling the need of a hospital for the poor of Stockholm, and the impossibility of getting money to build one, nobly gave up her own jewels that they might be sold to obtain the necessary funds. Some time afterwards she visited the hospital raised by her bounty, and when she saw many who had been rescued as the result of her sacrifice, exclaimed, "Here are my jewels back again." This truly royal incident carries in its bosom a world of suggestion to those children of the King who may be so circumstanced as to be able and willing to imitate it.



A SAPPHIRE.



CHAPTER VII.

CRYSTALS OF SERVICE.

NO number of liberal gifts to those who are already serving Christ, will excuse any Christian from personal effort on the behalf of others. The command is not "Give;" but "Go." In addition to earnest sacrifice, there must be eager search if gems are to be found. In Ceylon, when the pearl fishers are returning from their quest, the eagerness of the boat-owners to know the result of their labour is most intense. But in this, and in diamond digging, immature hopes are often disappointed, and ardent natures chilled by repeated failure. Very few large diamonds are found; yet the skilled miner is content to work on to gain the little ones, and one great gem makes him happy for life. The pearl diver will sometimes dive eight times before he gets an oyster, though at other times he will bring up three, or even five—two in each hand, and one under his arm. If he gets twenty-five in the day he makes a good average, though sometimes he finds a hundred. Not a

hundred pearls, remember, but a hundred oyster shells ; and perhaps five thousand of these will be opened and not yield £5 of pearls ; while, on the other hand, there have been found as many as one hundred and fifty small pearls in one shell. This very uncertainty lends a zest to the toil, for no one can say but that in spite of repeated failure the next attempt may be overwhelmingly successful.

Servants of God, diving into the briny sea of sorrow, or tunnelling into the dark mountain of sin, seeking jewels for the Master's crown, yet often disheartened by lack of success, remember the pearl fishers, or the diamond diggers, and gain courage and hope. Failing nine hundred and ninety-nine times, the thousandth attempt may compensate for all the past. Persevere. Toiling all night and catching nothing, the risen Lord on shore will, in His own time, direct you to the right side of the ship, if you are whole-hearted in His service. Plod on. Christ, who can bring up a fish with money in its mouth, can show us the oysters with pearls. And if every hopeful case does not answer to our expectations, some do, thank God. If every inquirer is not a convert, neither is every oyster a bearer of pearls. Yet pearls are found, and converts made, notwithstanding. Do not be discouraged.

In Australia, when a dive has been very successful, a buoy is thrown out to mark the spot, and the dingy, drifting with the tide, is rowed back again to the same place. When this happens, the other boats of the fleet are attracted to the spot, and all share the spoil. Earnest Christians soon discover where souls are being saved, and it is little wonder if a crowd should collect there. "Where the carcase is, thither will the eagles be gathered together."

"The brightest gems in the heaven that glow
Shine out from midnight sky ;
The whitest pearls of the sea below
In its lowest caverns lie."

This verse is the poetical expression of the generally received opinion, which needs somewhat to be modified. True on the whole ; yet Mr. Streeter remarks that the finest pearl seen in England for years, and probably the best the Australian fisheries have ever produced, was found only knee-deep in water.

And while in Borneo, that treasure house of gems, the deeper they dig the more plentiful the precious stones, the larger the size, and the finer the quality ; yet in most other places, as many gems, and as good, are found in the surface earth as lower down.

In Brazil the river beds are in some places strewn with diamonds; and hence it is not at all an improbable thing for an inexperienced person to become the finder of a most valuable stone. On one occasion a Brazilian slave thrust an iron rod through the earth-crust, and found £300,000 worth of diamonds, at which price he probably purchased his liberty.

Recently in Manchester, United States, a labourer picked up a rough diamond in the street; while in Ohio a boy, seeking shells to border his aunt's garden, found in one of them a most valuable pearl.

And in Birmingham, amongst a lot of shells brought to be made into mother-of-pearl buttons, a pearl was discovered which eventually sold for £800.

But the most remarkable case of accidental discovery is in connection with the famous pearl "La Peregrina," which belonged to the King of Spain, and was pronounced beyond all valuation. The oyster from which it came was discovered by a negro boy, but the shell was so small that the fishermen were inclined to throw it into the sea without examination. Judge of their surprise when, on opening it, they found this wondrous pearl. "The slave was rewarded with his liberty, and his master with the post of Alcade of Panama."

As in a crystal, behold in these facts another: that in God's service very often the weak things are used to confound the mighty; the foolish, the wise; and the things that are not, to bring to nought the things that are. This is true, both to history and to experience. Beginning with Galilean fishermen, all along the history of the Church, the Lord raises up ordinary men endued with extraordinary power, to do His work. It is thus, my reader, that both you and I may have hope, that even we may seek and find some souls who shall at last shine resplendent in glory, while we shall be content to take a lowly place, rejoicing in their honour.

A European in South Africa, noticing that the natives discovered more diamonds than the white men, asked a Kaffir the reason. "Ah!" said he, "we black fellows get down on our knees; you white men don't like the dirt." And, black man or white, the successful soul-winner is he who gets down on his knees amongst the dirt. The only way to touch dirt and still keep your garments unspotted, is to do it on your knees.

In China they wear thick straw shoes, and walking along the river bed, the diamonds stick in the straw. Many of God's jewels are won by a consistent walk.

The pearl diver first takes off his clothes, and in

vain will any man seek for souls until he has stripped himself of pride and self-confidence. "Put off the old man."

In "*Pearling Life*" we are told that in the Australian fisheries, "the quantity of shell brought up varies greatly with the disposition prevailing among the men, the happy mood generally producing the best results." Searching for God's pearls it is the same. Dispirited and downcast we are almost sure to fail. The joy of the Lord is our strength; in the buoyancy of the Holy Spirit we prevail against what else were an impossibility; we run through a troop and leap over a wall.

To him that hath shall be given. For as only the glad soul is likely to be successful in finding God's jewels, who but those who have experienced it, can tell the thrill of joy caused by the discovery of even one, especially the first one! They speak of the luxury of winning souls; it is more than that, it is an intoxication. In South Africa there was a certain allotment from which but little was expected; it was sold for £30, and handed over to one Antoine to work on shares. Here was discovered the "Stewart" diamond, which weighs nearly two ounces. "Antoine's feelings, when he first obtained a glimpse of the treasure, may be better imagined than described. He says he was

working in the claim, when he told his boy to leave off picking in the centre and commence at the side. Not being understood he took a pick and began himself, when he was suddenly spell-bound by the sight of a large stone, with the primary aspect of a diamond. For some minutes he could neither speak nor move, for fear of dispelling the apparent illusion, but, collecting his energies, he made a dart forward and clutched the prize. Even then, however, he did not feel quite safe, and it required a grand effort to reach the cart which had to be called into requisition. For two whole days he was unable to eat anything, from the intensity of his excitement." Yet there are people who object to excitement when we find jewels for the Redeemer's crown. Perhaps they are right; but if they felt more the value of the soul, they would thrill more at its salvation. There is joy in the presence of the angels of God over even one.

Joy over Jewels! And sometimes, there is liberty, as in the case of the slave in Brazil, already mentioned, and many more which might be named. Wealth, also, for many a poor man has thus been enriched. And honour too, as when Tavernier, the celebrated French jeweller, who brought so many gems from the East, received from the King a patent of nobility.

Even without wealth or honour, the joy of possessing, for a little while, such gems of God, is reward enough. The most famous American preacher of the century was accustomed to carry with him some precious stones, and, in moments of leisure or weariness, to refresh himself with a sight of their glory and beauty, as he affectionately fondled them, thereby, perhaps, gaining inspiration for those flashes of oratory for which he was so famous.

But better is the communion of saints than the sight of earth-gems. When Barnabas came to Antioch and saw the grace of God in the disciples there, he was glad. Oh! what living radiance streams from one indwelt by the living Christ, and how greatly other Christian hearts are cheered by fellowship with such an one!

Perhaps, however, it is chiefly by the grace of God in the hearts of the little ones that we learn lessons of love. There is something more than of earth about a simple child who trusts in Jesus; indeed, of such is the kingdom of heaven. Let those of us who are parents have as our highest ambition that these dear ones, who are our jewels, may also be God's. Let us hold them as a sacred trust for Him so that we may be saved *and our house*. And then, when He who permitted us to be

gladdened for a little while by their sunny smiles and winsome ways, shall claim them again for Himself, we shall, even through our tears, rejoice in their higher glory, and our own inheritance with the saints in light. The Eastern story concerning Rabbi Meir, given in verse by Richard C. Trench is most pathetic in this connection :—

“In schools of wisdom all the day was spent ;
His steps at eve the Rabbi homeward bent,
With homeward thoughts which dwelt upon the wife
And two fair children who consoled his life :
She, meeting at the threshold, led him in,
And with the words preventing did begin—
‘ Ever rejoicing at your wished return,
Yet do I most so now ; for since this morn
I have been much perplexed, and sorely tried
Upon one point, which you shall now decide.

“ Some years ago a friend, into my care,
Some jewels gave ; rich, precious gems they were ;
But having given them in my charge, this friend
Did afterward nor come for them nor send,
But left them in my keeping for so long
That now it almost seems to me a wrong,
That he should suddenly arrive, to-day,
To take those jewels, which he left, away.
What think you ? Shall I freely yield them back,
And with no murmuring—so henceforth to lack
Those gems myself, which I had learned to see
Almost as mine for ever, mine in fee ?

'What question can be here? Your own true heart
Must needs advise you of the only part.
That may be claimed again which was but lent,
And should be yielded with no discontent;
Nor surely can we find herein a wrong,
That it was left us to enjoy so long.'
'Good is the word,' she answered. 'May we now
And evermore that it is good allow!'
And rising, to an inner chamber led,
And there she showed him, stretched upon one bed,
Two children pale; and he the jewels knew
Which God had lent him and resumed anew."

In Eastern countries large jewels are always claimed by the King, while the finder is rewarded by his freedom, if a slave, and subsequently by having one or more villages given to him. We shall be gladly satisfied to lay our trophies down at Jesus' feet without reward. For they are His, and we are His, and for Him we sought them. But He will not have it so. He will say, "Have thou authority over ten cities—Thou over five." Then shall we fully know the joy, and freedom, and wealth, and honour of being permitted to be co-workers with God.

"Where loyal hearts and true
Stand ever in the light,
All rapture through and through
In God's most holy sight."

My colleague in this dear service, Manton Smith, sometimes uses an incident which always brings tears to many eyes. The eldest daughter in a fashionable home was dressed ready for a ball, when the little sister seeing the flashing gems in her hair, climbed on a chair, and throwing her arms round her neck, said—

“Sissie, shall you have any jewels in your crown when you get to heaven?”

She did not answer, but when she got to the assembly nothing seemed to be right. To her the lights burnt dimly, the music was discordant, and the dancing lagged, until, thoroughly tired of it, she ordered her carriage very early and came home. Going straight up to her little sister's bedroom, and throwing herself on the bed, she awoke her and said—

“Sissie, you shall have one jewel in your crown, for I'll give myself to Jesus to-night.”

The glory we would gladly yield only to the Lord Jesus, He will of grace restore to us. Each soul won will be an added brightness to our heaven, and “They that are wise shall shine as the firmament, and they that turn many to righteousness as the stars for ever and ever.”

Shall you have any jewels to your crown?



CHAPTER VIII.

MYSTERIES OF APPRECIATION.

IF precious stones and pearls were only living, how little they would understand the dignity in store for them, when, with much roughness, and in the midst of dire confusion, they are torn from their matrix, or rifled from their maternal shell. Archbishop Trench puts this point finely in a poem which perhaps suggested that quoted in Chapter V.:

“ A dew-drop falling on the ocean wave
Exclaimed, in fear, ‘ I perish in this grave ’ ;
But, in a shell received, that drop of dew
Unto a pearl of wondrous beauty grew ;
And happy now the grace did magnify,
Which thrust it forth (as it had feared) to die ;
Until again ‘ I perish quite,’ it said
Torn by rude diver from its ocean bed.
Vain apprehension ! Soon it gleamed a gem,
Chief jewel of a monarch’s diadem.”

And when, convicted of sin by the Spirit, the soul finds agony where before was peace, how little it can know of God’s gracious purpose, or of all the gladness He will work out of this pain !

Should these lines meet the eye of anyone who has been disturbed from the false rest of the world, and is yet miserable, shaken with legal fears, and trembling to die, know, O soul! that this terror is only the tumult of the jewel being torn from the rock, and without it you would be always buried in the darkness.

And when brought to light do not suppose that everyone will at once acknowledge you as one of God's jewels. But you may be precious in God's sight, though Abraham be ignorant of you, and Israel acknowledge you not. And you may be a gem of the kingdom, though covered with an earth-crust, and full of flaws. You may be a diamond, though a rough one. It doth not yet appear what we shall be.

Even jewels of earth are sometimes lightly esteemed. When Columbus discovered Cuba he saw there a woman with three rows of pearls about her neck, and breaking an earthenware plate of many colours in pieces, he purchased for a piece or two of it one row of the pearls, and for another plate many more. A native of India, finding many sapphires, loaded a hundred goats with them, and taking them to Simla offered them for sale, but ignorant of their value, no one would purchase them. He was compelled to carry them to Delhi,

where he found ready buyers at a large price. The Abbas Mirza diamond was for a long time used as a flint to strike a light for a peasant in Khorassan ; while in Brazil, before their value was known, diamonds were commonly used as counters in games of chance. At the battle of Nancy there was a diamond thrown aside, which a soldier picked up and sold for a florin to a priest at Montigny, and ultimately it found its way to the Bernese authorities, who will not now part with it at any price. An Englishman, now dead, used to say he threw away the first diamond found in South Africa. Someone brought it to him dripping with the water from which it had been taken, and said, "Is not this a diamond?" "Bottle glass!" was his contemptuous reply, as he flung it into the bush.

The recent discovery of African diamonds at Griqualand reads like a romance. The first was amongst some bright stones which a child gathered at a river to play with. A visitor struck with its brightness, offered to buy it from Van Niekirk, whose child had found it, but he could not understand anyone purchasing a stone, and said if his visitor wanted it he could have it, but he would take no money. O'Reilly, his guest, explained that he suspected it was valuable, and it was at length

agreed that if it was worth anything, when it was sold, the money should be divided between them, and so they parted.

At Colesburg, the man who had been the guest wrote his name on a window pane with it, but so little did others believe in his idea that someone threw the stone into the street, and it was only with great difficulty found again. It was then sent in an *unregistered* letter to Grahamstown, where a leading scientist pronounced it to be a splendid diamond, which judgment was afterwards confirmed. It was exhibited at the Paris Exhibition in 1867, and at its close purchased for £500.

These instances of unrecognized value might be multiplied, but let this suffice to enforce the truth that real worth is often overlooked. Nowhere is this so true as in the case of the godly. The beginning of grace in the soul is sometimes so insignificant that it takes more than human sight to discover it. Not infrequently the regenerated soul is itself unconscious of the change; if not, many around him have their doubts, or give it a blank denial. Only the pure in heart see God, and only the pure in heart can see God's image in a fellow man. If even the apostles hesitate to receive a converted Saul, it cannot be wondered at if the ungodly esteem Christians as the offscouring

of all things, or if, in killing them, they think they do God service. In this contempt for the chosen of God, many of the world remind us—

"Of one whose hand
Like the base Indian, flung a pearl away,
Richer than all his tribe."

But were their value known, how different would be the world's action! If Sodom and Gomorrah knew they were spared for the five righteous men, how it would esteem the five, could it find them! That same Van Nieckirk who so easily parted with the first African diamond, recollected, when he received so much money for it, that he had seen a similar stone in the hand of a native some time before, and at once set out in search of him. He had disappeared, but after a long interval he discovered him, saw the precious stone, and gave all he had for it—five hundred sheep, horses and other riches. He proved his wisdom by doing it, for the stone was sold for £11,200, and is now known as **THE STAR OF SOUTH AFRICA**. This is Christ's parable of the merchantman selling all he had to buy the pearl, turned into history, diamond being in this case the coveted treasure.

One of the largest known pearls is the Yous-souppoff. It was brought from India, in 1620, by

Gongibus, of Calais, and sold to Philip IV. of Spain for £18,000. When asked by the King how he could have ventured to risk all his fortune in a single insignificant article, the merchant replied, "Because I knew there was a King of Spain to buy it." And with our thoughts set upon the King of Glory, when we are called to any sacrifice for the sake of souls, we can endure, as seeing Him who is invisible. Yea, better were it for us to lead even one little child to Christ at the forfeit of a fortune, than to amass much wealth on earth and miss the chief joy of heaven. Shrink not from the investment; pour out your all and purchase the jewel; there is a King of kings who will receive both you and your gem. Lay up such treasures in heaven, O thou that knowest their heavenly value!



TOPAZ.



CHAPTER IX.
ENIGMAS OF TRIAL.

JOB magnificently describes the work of the miner in the heart of the earth, as he goes in that path which no fowl knoweth, and which the vulture's eye hath not seen, searching out all perfection. But the perfection of these precious things is not yet. Discovered in their matrix of earth, much of earth's defilement still attaches to them; and these spots and crusts must be removed ere, in full beauty, the gem can flash its radiance in the sunlight. After the finding comes the grinding: the rough jewels are put into the lapidary's hand, and the work of cleaving and cutting and polishing begins. Whether it is wise to devote the immense sums of money which are spent annually on the polishing of precious stones, to that object, must be left an open question. Mr. Ruskin points out that if the same funds were applied to the cutting of rocks instead of stones, there would not be a single reef or unsafe harbour round our shores, and thousands of lives would annually be saved. But our civilization has not yet advanced to the stage

of caring more for life than mere adornment, though that is precisely the principle of the Bible—"the life is more than meat, and the body than raiment"; and it is of the lapidary's work on living souls we now speak.

The grace that transforms us at the beginning will not cease until, at the end, it leads us to perfection. Though the process be tedious, though the cost be great, and though the pain be severe, the Heavenly Lapidary, the Lord Himself, will not leave us—no, not for all our flinching—until we shine in His own image, and mirror forth His perfect light.

In Amsterdam, which is the most famous place for the polishing of precious stones, and where they say quite one-third of the ten thousand resident Jews are engaged in this craft, the stranger is always advised—as I was—to see the diamond cutting, which is one of the chief sights of the city. But when you go to see the diamond polishing, the chief thing you see is that there are scarcely any diamonds to be seen. All the visions of flashing splendour you have conjured up suddenly disappear, and you behold cranks and bands, and wheels, and pulleys—machinery, not gems. If you had not already been told that they were polishing diamonds you would scarcely discover it yourself;

and as it is, you find much difficulty in understanding the process. But the lapidary knows. To a thousandth part of an inch he knows how much is to be taken off the stone, and to the fraction of an hour the time it will occupy ; and not one unnecessary turn of the wheel, and not one needless ounce of pressure, and not one second's surplus friction will be given to it.

As the perfection of the diamond lies under a hard crust, which must be removed by this process, so it is with God's jewels. And when we are sometimes perplexed by our circumstances, and cannot solve the enigma of our trials, let us remember that all this agony is necessitated by our present imperfection ; and that the Great Lapidary who controls the process, and who undertakes the work because of the ultimate perfection He wills to bestow upon us, will not allow us to be a moment longer on the wheel than necessary. The very pain is a mark of love. All things work together for good to them that love God.

In the midst of uncongenial surroundings, either in home life, or in society, or in the Church, frequently meeting with people who misunderstood and irritate you, do not get worried, child of God ; but as diamonds can only be manipulated by diamond dust, think that perhaps these little trials

are sent to make you more patient and gentle. We do not need advice concerning the great trials of life, for even those with a little faith know then that their only refuge is in God ; but how often we forget to cast our little cares on Him who careth for us, or are almost ashamed at our need of succour under such trifles ! But at the end we shall probably find that these little things—which God permitted, if He did not send—will have had a greater share in the evolution of our glory than the troubles which almost crushed us to the ground.

“ I only polished am in mine own dust,
Naught else against my hardness can prevail ;
And thou, O man, in thine own sufferings must
Be polished : every meaner art will fail.”

Thus one imperfect saint polishes another, and is polished himself. Satan uses men to mar each other ; Christ causes one Christian to bless the other, and that too in those things which seem most evil at the time. Even our Lord was not perfect without suffering ; and when we suffer according to the will of God, we may commit the keeping of our souls to Him in well-doing as unto a faithful Creator. It is only by suffering in the flesh that we cease from sin.

We must not only suffer much, we must also lose much, before the full radiance of grace is seen.

The ancients never knew the possible brilliance of their jewels, for they feared to reduce their size, and sacrificed brilliance to bulk. But now with unsparing hand the skilful polisher does not hesitate to cut away two-thirds of the stone, if the remaining third may more nearly approach perfection. The Great Mogul was reduced from 787 carats to 279; and the celebrated Pitt diamond from 410 to 136, at a cost of two years' labour and £5,000. Only by this seeming waste could its latent beauties be revealed to the world. And we, too, must lose many of our false ideas, angularities of character and aggregations of training before we can be perfect. At times, things we hold dearer than life will be taken from us, lest they should come between us and the highest glory. A moderately-fine stone well cut is much better than a superior one less skilfully treated, and hence the paradox of grace that God adds by subtraction. "It gained so much in the lapidary's hands," are the words used concerning the Nassak diamond. Yet the lapidary was all the while employed in grinding it down; but in taking away its bulk he added to its beauty. Be steady then under the hand which fashions you! Hope thou in God, thou shalt yet praise Him! "O thou afflicted, tossed with tempest, and not comforted,

behold, I will lay thy stones with fair colours, and lay thy foundations with sapphires. And I will make thy windows of agates, and thy gates of carbuncles, and all thy borders of pleasant stones. . . . This is the heritage of the servants of the Lord."

Often precious stones are put into the fire. The Oriental cornelian and Brazilian topaz change colour in the burning, and the black spots of the amethyst and hyacinth can only be removed by heat. Thus God's jewels are purified; all that can stand the fire must pass through it, and in the fierce heat of trial many a commonplace Christian begins to glow with new hues of grace, at which men greatly wonder.

"Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season in heaviness through manifold temptations: that the trial of your faith, being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, though it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise and honour and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ."

Jewels are not, however, always under the file in the fire. Sometimes they are in honey. Agates are cleansed in this fashion, and even dyed; upon which Francis de Sales remarks: "All kinds of precious stones, cast into honey, become more brilliant thereby, each one according to its colour;

and all persons become more acceptable in their vocation, when they join devotion with it ; household cares are thereby rendered tranquil, the love of husband and wife more sincere, the service of the prince more faithful, and all kinds of business more easy and pleasant.”

Thank God that all His means for our future perfection are not rasping. He gives His elect much joy and comfort between the trials, ay, often in the very midst of them, and in the midst of our devotion much sweetness of character is developed. Were it not for the hardness of our hearts, perchance He would never choose another way ; but our sin is so ingrained, that only through much tribulation can we enter the kingdom.

“Many a blow and biting sculpture
Polished well those stones elect,
In their places now compacted
By the Heavenly Architect ;
Who therewith hath willed for ever
That His palace should be decked.”



THE SHAH DIAMOND.



CHAPTER X.

TESTS OF REALITY.

WHEN the ancients found a diamond, they used to place it on an anvil, and test it by the strong blow of a hammer. As diamonds, though so hard, are very brittle, of course they were broken ; and hence no large diamonds were known in those days. Doubtless many a royal gem must have been shattered and lost through their ignorance. Gems are now tested in a more rational manner, the most essential quality being specific gravity. In Brazil the natives rub two diamonds together, and their trained ears can tell by the peculiar rasping sound if both be true.

This care is the more necessary because there are many false jewels ; and constant testing is necessary with God's Jewels because there are many hypocrites and many self-deceived.

When, some years ago, an inventory of French crown jewels was made, two hundred and fifty false ones were discovered, notwithstanding the vigilance and watchfulness of the century since the Reign of

Terror. If false ones creep in there they may creep in anywhere. There was one such amongst the Twelve; and if there is a Church in this land, or any other land, where there is not a sham Christian, I should very much like to hear of it. "Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith; prove your own selves."

Litharge, white sand, and potash will make a paste diamond; white strass with oxide of cobalt a sapphire, or with oxide of copper an emerald; alumina, dissolved in fluoride of calcium, makes rubies; carbonate of lime will do for pearls; and a mixture of natural disposition, religious training, pious feeling, and cant is often made to do duty for Christianity. But more than this will be required at the great day. Woe to the man by whom the offence cometh! Woe to the self-deceived and the deceivers in that day! The sinners in Zion shall be terribly afraid: fearfulness shall surprise the hypocrites. Make sure you are a real jewel. A mistake here is fatal.

Recently, a traveller shipped to England a stone which was to eclipse in splendour some of the most notable of known diamonds. It was pronounced by several amateur mineralogists to be a genuine gem, and the finder entered into a bargain with a certain traveller for its sale. Having insured it

for £4,000, they committed it to the care of the Peninsular and Oriental Company, who delivered it safely to a trusted friend in London. Submitted to an expert, the verdict was "a pebble of no value." A similar instance is told of an Indian nabob who had a set of diamonds of which he was justly proud, and which he only exhibited on special occasions. Coming over to this country, something went wrong with the setting, and they were sent to a Bond Street jeweller for repair. Passed from hand to hand they were sent back again with the verdict that they were not worth repairing. Some Indian jeweller had abstracted the diamond and substituted pieces of glass. From being the fancied possessor of a jewel of untold worth, he became only the owner of a child's plaything, a bauble, a toy. Let our prayer then be "Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me and know my thoughts: and see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting."

One of the simplest tests for a diamond is to breathe on it. If it be true, the breath will instantly disappear; if false, the dimness will linger long. Test yourself in this manner with reference to temptation. A Christian walking in the Spirit instantly flings off the evil; if you retain it, one of

two things is true—either you are not a Christian, or you are walking in the flesh.

For it is quite possible for a jewel to be true, and yet for a while be defiled or obscured. The wonderful ruby in the Queen's Crown, given to Edward the Black Prince by the King of Castile, was on one occasion lost for several days. Some thieves, overpowering the guard in the Jewel Room of the Tower, fled with the Crown. The alarm was at once raised, and several persons started in pursuit. A warder was knocked down, and the thieves pursued their course in safety down Tower Hill. Here some of the keeper's party overtook them, and one (Captain Beckman) grappled with Blood, the ringleader of the robbers, and escaping his fire, tore the Crown from his grasp. Several of the jewels rolled out, and amongst them this ruby, valued at £10,000. It could not be found at the time in spite of diligent search, and not until several days after, when it was picked up by an old woman who was sweeping a crossing.

The Pitt diamond was once lost in a somewhat similar manner. A hundred years ago, shortly after the Garde-Meuble was broken into during the revolution in Paris, and the jewels stolen, an anonymous letter was addressed to the Paris Commune, stating that some of the objects were in a ditch

in the Allée des Veuves, Champs-Élysées. The authorities at once proceeded to the spot which had been carefully indicated, and there found in the mud the Pitt diamond, and the no less famous agate-onyx cup, now in the National Library.

Backsliders are jewels in the mud. They do not cease to be jewels because they have left their place of privilege, and fallen so low. They do not revert to mud again, having once been changed. No, but they lose their brilliance for the time—they reflect no beams of light on those around, and none are arrested by their beauty. Yet pearls amongst pebbles are still pearls. God's heart of love goes out after these wandering ones, and His people seek to bring them back. It may be an old woman, often it is, or it may be the officials of the church who seek you; or perhaps in your heart may be heard the wooing voice of the Spirit uttering the words of God, "I will heal their backsliding, I will love them freely: for Mine anger is turned away from him."

Possibly it may be that the influence for Christ, once marred, may never be restored in this life. But there is another. The lost one may never be found on earth. Thank God there is a heaven. Jewels long hidden under the lava flood at Pompeii have been recovered undimmed, and at this moment

divers are searching for valuable gems lost in the sea near Trieste in 1822. Though the floods overwhelm the Lord's people, He will send from above and draw them out of many waters. When the river overflowed the summer palace of the Shah of Persia at Lar, he fled in such haste that his jewels were forgotten. An astute officer of the court gave orders that the banks of the river were to be searched when the flood had subsided, and by this means he restored the jewels to his master, and was rewarded by being promoted to high rank. So shall it be at length, when the floods of ungodly men cease and God's servants are rewarded—

“The Lord will gather up His jewels, won
From earth, and yet not earthy; sharpest griefs
And trials here will but have given to each
A polished brightness; that celestial light,
Reflecting from a thousand points, the gems
May sparkle with a radiance worthy heaven!

* * * * *

The Lord will gather up His jewels! Oh,
May we be numbered with those gems of light!
Blest Saviour! Thou hast bought us with Thy blood;
Shed on us now Thy glory, make us Thine;
Change our vile natures by Thy Spirit's power,
And make us to be numbered with Thy saints
In glory everlasting! Yea, Amen!”



CHAPTER XI.

GLIMPSES OF DESTINY.

GLORY Everlasting! This is the wondrous destiny of God's chosen. Glimpses of what it will be are given to us in God's Word; but human language fails to convey any adequate idea of such a surpassing grandeur.

Daniel, on the banks of the Hiddekel, had such a glimpse when he saw "a certain man clothed in linen, whose loins were girded with fine gold of Uphaz; his body also was like the beryl, and his face as the appearance of lightning, and his eyes as lamps of fire, and his arms and his feet like in colour to polished brass, and the voice of his words like the voice of a multitude. And I Daniel alone saw the vision, . . . and there remained no strength in me." Little wonder that the trembling exile fell fainting at the sight of such glory. But the inheritance of the saints in light is fairer than this.

Another glimpse of it was given to the beloved John in Patmos. It is only to men greatly beloved,

like Daniel and John, that such revelations are given. He saw a city so bright that it had no need of the sun to shine in it.

“Ha! yon burst of crystal splendour,
Starlight, sunlight, blent in one:
Starlight set in Arctic azure,
Sunlight from the burning zone!
Gold and silver, gems and marble,
All creation’s jewellery;
Earth’s uncovered waste of riches,
Treasures of the ancient sea.
Heir of glory,
What is that to thee and me?
City of the pearl-bright portal;
City of the jasper wall;
City of the golden pavement;
Seat of endless festival.
City of Jehovah, Salem,
City of Eternity,
To thy bridal-hall of gladness
From this prison would I flee.
Heir of glory,
That shall be for thee and me.”

But the most glorious glimpse of it was given to the Best Beloved. When on the side of snowy Hermon His raiment became white and glistening, and He was transfigured before His wondering disciples, He shows us what we ourselves, by His grace, shall be when He comes “to be glorified in

His saints, and admired in (not only by) all them that believe ;” when He shall “bring His sons from far, and His daughters from the ends of the earth ; every one that is called by My name, for I have created him for My glory. I have formed him : yea, I have made him.”

Perhaps the most splendid jewel in the country is a butterfly fashioned of coloured diamonds, blue, green, yellow, brown, white, and black. Both for preciousness and beauty this magnificent adornment is justly esteemed ; but the least glimpse of the Church, when as the train filling the temple, in the day the Lord shall be seen high and lifted up, will be infinitely more glorious. The Moham-medans think the earth is flat, and bounded by a solid mountain of emerald, which would certainly be a fine boundary for it. But who shall tell the glory of even the outermost circle of the throng which shall at last be gathered around the throne, God’s Nazarites, “more ruddy in body than rubies, and their polishing of sapphires” ?

Jewels are worn on marriage days. That will be the nuptial day of Christ and the Church. He who is so dazzling in His glory, that John when he saw Him fell at His feet as if dead, will claim us as His own. And we shall be like Him, for we shall see Him as He is.

Jewels are used on feast days. Marie de Medici, wife of Henry IV. of France, wore at the christening of her son, a gorgeous dress, ornamented with three thousand diamonds and thirty-two thousand pearls ; but when the dawn of glory shall come, then shall be spread the marriage feast of the Lamb, for which the Bride shall have made herself ready.

Jewels are used on birthdays. The Czar of Russia gave his wife, on the 26th of November, 1887, a necklace of forty large emeralds. For nine months his agents had been travelling over the Continent with great secrecy, seeking the precious stones, for had it been known that the Czar wanted so many of one sort, the price would have gone up tremendously. When the Czarina received on her birthday this beautiful gift she danced round the room with delight. It was indeed a royal present and a worthy one where love is ever green. That day, when God shall gather up His jewels will be the best birthday of the perfect Church, when the First-Begotten from the dead shall receive those who by His power shall also be born from the tomb incorruptible.

Jewels are worn on days of victory. Constantine entered Rome in a chariot of gold adorned with gems ; and when Mingti, a Chinese Emperor, went

in procession, the ground was afterwards literally covered with pearls. But that day of days will be a day of eternal triumph for God's people; and Christ the mighty Victor shall be adorned with His royal jewels. Behold, He cometh with clouds of saints.

Jewels are worn on jubilee days. The scene in Westminster Abbey on the Jubilee Day of Queen Victoria is described as surpassing even the tales of glory in the "Arabian Nights;" such a sea of fire shone in the diamonds which there graced beauty. But the day of the earth's jubilee will be far more splendid. Then will there be an exceeding and eternal weight of glory like a sea of glass mingled with fire.

And last of all, jewels are worn on coronation days. When a new king is enthroned in Persia, pearls are showered upon him; and against the day when Christ shall be enthroned as the acknowledged King of the Earth, the Lord is preparing the jewels which shall lend glory to Him whose right it is to reign. Christ gave Himself for us to purify *unto Himself* a peculiar people. We are to be for Him, and not for another. It was little wonder that Shah Jehan's father was terribly angry when his traitorous son, who had deposed him, coolly demanded his father's jewels that he

might wear them at his own coronation. God's jewels must never be yielded to the usurper, but must be kept virgin for the rightful Heir.

Recently there was discovered an immense diamond in South Africa, which has been purchased by a syndicate of eight persons, who intend to keep it until the Prince of Wales comes to the throne, when they hope to sell it to him for his coronation at the modest price of one million and a half. It requires more than one individual to undertake a gigantic responsibility of this kind; and until the great and notable day of the Lord comes, God appoints many ministries for His people, many servants are sent forth to minister to those who shall be heirs of salvation, who meanwhile are kept by the power of God, through faith, until "that day"—that crowning day that's coming by-and-by.

"Oh that the months would roll away,
And bring that coronation day!
The King of Grace shall fill the throne,
His Father's glory all His own."



CHAPTER XII.

FLASHES OF PERFECTION.

“THEY shall be Mine in that day when I make up My jewels,” saith the Lord by the mouth of the Prophet Malachi concerning His chosen.

Therefore, none of them shall be lost. “They shall be Mine on that day,” saith the Lord of Hosts, using His very name as an oath, for he who can swear by no greater swears by Himself, that we might have strong consolation. Those who are God’s now will be His then. He will not fail nor be discouraged until He shall bring us safely home. Courage, then, faint soul! Thy name is graven on the palms of His hands. He will never leave thee nor forsake thee. He cannot forget.

“He by Himself hath sworn,
I on His oath depend,
I shall, on eagle wings upborne,
To heaven ascend.”

“They shall be Mine”; that is to say, they shall all be gathered together. The command shall go forth, “Gather My saints together unto Me those

that have made a covenant with Me by sacrifice," and the chiming of these jewels, like the musical stones of Skiddaw, will be the sweetest harmony of the skies. From all quarters they shall come, from the east and from the west; from the Dark Continent and the brighter ones; from the isles of the sea and the ends of the earth. Ancient ages and the time of the End shall both yield many of their sons as gems for the Redeemer. Then jewels lost on earth shall be found to the praise of His honour, and the forgotten ones be seen in matchless glory. For some now are, like the Great Table Diamond or the Russian Table, which though known to exist somewhere, are not to be found in any accessible collection; or, like the heaps of nameless precious stones which are hoarded in the Sultan's treasury in Constantinople. Even out of Gilded Babylon, that apostate church, shall be gathered the precious stones and pearls wherewith she hath decked herself.

And though jewels be rare things here, there will be a great multitude of them there, for the Lord of *Hosts* will bring many sons to glory, even as Jehoshaphat won from Moab precious jewels, more than they could carry.

"They shall be Mine," said the Lord. But, are they not His already? Yes, He owns them now,

and then will own them ; they now confess Him as Lord, He will then confess them as His treasure. There is some doubt whether the crown jewels of Russia or Persia are the most splendid in the world ; but in that day the most manifestly glorious will be the crown jewels of this chosen generation, this royal priesthood, this holy nation, this peculiar people ; and they shall show forth the praise of Him who hath called them out of darkness into His marvellous light.

“ Then will He own His servant’s name,
Before His Father’s face ;
And in the New Jerusalem
Appoint my soul a place.”

He will appoint us a place where we may honour Him. He will make up his jewels. And as one star differeth from another in glory, so shall it be in the Resurrection. The places shall be given to those for whom they are prepared, and to those who are prepared for them. Christ, who has gone away to prepare the appointed place for us each, is also like a Greater David preparing, with all His might, for the house of God ; “ onyx stones, and stones to be set, glistering stones, and of divers colours, and all manner of precious stones, and marble stones in abundance ;” and like David, too, how truly He can say, “ Because I have set my

affection to the house of my God, I have given of mine own proper good to the house of my God"!

The preparation complete, we shall then be "set" as God shall will, for His glory and our own good. After the finding and grinding, will come the binding. Christians are not always in their proper places here, some are exalted and some overlooked; but in that day, each will be properly valued, and perhaps the first shall be last, and the last first. Even in South Kensington Museum they made mistakes in arranging the precious stones; and Professor Church, on April 6th, 1881, pointed out the errors. But we have no Church on earth able definitely to decide the exact places for God's saints; let us be content to wait until the Master Himself shall appraise us; and if we have done well, praise us too.

There are in the Queen's crown three thousand and two stones of differing kinds; but how many and how glorious shall those be who shall be in the diadem of our Sovereign! As Joab took the crown of Ammon, with the precious stones, and set it upon David's head, even thus shall Jehovah set His people as a crown on the head of the Lord Jesus. "And the Lord their God shall save them in that day as the flock of His people: for they shall be as the stones of a crown, lifted up as an ensign upon

his land ; for how great is His goodness, and how great is His beauty”!

In Peru there was formerly, in one of the temples, an immense emerald ; and when other emeralds were found (and Peru is famous for the number of emeralds discovered), the smaller stones were brought into the temple and presented to the Great Emerald. Thus we, partakers of the divine nature, shall gather around the Divine Christ, yielding Him our homage. In their setting, each stone shall serve to enhance His loveliness, and He shall be the beautiful Centre of attraction, both to us and to the universe. The saints of God can never gather around another than He ; only unto our Shiloh shall the gathering of His people be.

In one of the churches of Belgium there is, in the Chapelle de Saint-Sang, a beautiful casket studded with all sorts of precious gems. These have been presented by the devout because of their belief in the myth that the casket enshrines a drop of the Saviour's blood. The precious stones I saw, but not the precious blood. And I thought as I looked upon it, that what is only mythical and superstitious here, will be most real in the Golden City. All the jewels shall be set around the blood of the Lamb, through which they obtained the victory. “Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive

power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." Worthy is the Lamb! The precious stones and pleasant things with which the God of forces has been honoured, belong rightfully to Him.

In the Russian Kremlin there is a Bible which was presented by the mother of Peter the Great, the cover of which is so studded with emeralds that the services of two porters are required every time it is moved. And Czar Michael's presentation copy of the Gospel at Troitsa is hardly to be opened for the weight of its cross of rubies. Thus, rudely is honour done to the Revelation of God, and to the Gospel of His dear Son. But no glory short of the general assembly of the Church of the Firstborn, and an innumerable company of angels in the city of the living God, the heavenly Jerusalem, is commensurate to that Word of God, through which is our salvation. Truth now in streets will then be on the throne.

When Florence Nightingale returned from the Crimea, the Queen gave her a beautiful jewel; and if we might choose, we might well wish to be such a one, given into the hand of our returning Saviour. It had a white onyx background, upon which was a red cross. On the cross was a crown in diamonds, and the Queen's initials underneath; while on a

black rim around the whole was the inscription, "Blessed are the merciful." It was a queenly present to a queenly woman, and most fitly represents what we might all choose at last to be. With a pure character like the white onyx, we should ever like to bear the red cross, showing where our hopes rest; and the crown upon us because we serve the King, whose name we bear because we love Him, and He is not ashamed to call us brethren. There will always perchance be the black rim, the memory of former transgressions; but we may have upon it, if not "Blessed are the merciful," at least this altered motto, "I have obtained mercy."

Nor think it strange if even out of our sin God may get glory. While sin will never be less blameworthy, nor grace ever give an excuse for continuing in sin, yet, as the jeweller shows his finest gems against a black background, who can say, but at last, against the black past of our lives, our future perfectness shall shine with an added glory, grace abounding over abounding sin?

In the temple every whit shall utter His glory. We read of a lady in America who had five thousand fire-flies skilfully placed on her dress, fastened, the ventral surface upward, with fine silver wires during the afternoon. When night came she

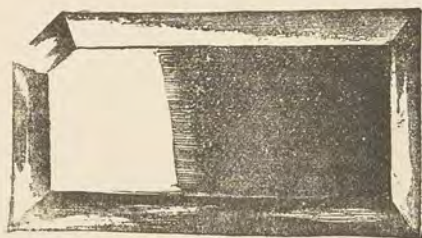
moved about covered with tremulous waves of reddish-yellow flame, amid the admiring and wondering company. She was a mass of living light. And thus, when earth's day is over, the saints of God, who have now but a dim radiance, shall shine forth as the sun in the kingdom of their Father, each soul won on earth, or each victory, being a new point in the flashing radiance.

Every earthly analogy fails. They speak of the glory surrounding the Shah of Persia when he holds a reception. He never appears except on a sunny day, and only at a time when the sun shines upon his throne. Then from his royal treasury he takes his jewels, and crowned and canopied, with five diamonds, each larger than the Koh-i-Noor, as buttons for his coat, and covered from head to foot with garments stiffened with gems, he ascends his throne, which now blazes like fire, and to such an extent that it is quite impossible to distinguish the minute parts. You only know that "He who is resplendent" sits there, and in a little while, dazzled, you are fain to turn your bewildered eyes away from the sight of such effulgence.

And in "that day" when God shall make up His jewels, Malachi tells us the "Sun of righteousness shall arise." It will be the Sun-day of the church. Happy the man whom God chooses and causes to

approach unto Himself. In His hand, or in His crown ; adorning royal robe, or in the skirts of His garments, what matter, so long as we are but near Him, whom our souls love? And if it be impossible to distinguish the individual in that burst of glory, we shall not be greatly grieved, but in His light we shall flash forth His grace for ever and ever, and from each living stone shall rise the song. " Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto Thy name give glory."

" And he 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 ; . . for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb is the light thereof."



THE GREAT TABLE DIAMOND.

His jewels rare,
 His treasure and His constant care ;
 His jewels bright, His royal right,
 His jewels fair.

Such are all those who fear His name,
 And tell it out nor fear the shame ;
 And often meet
 At Jesus' feet ;
 And soon they shall before the throne,
 Brilliant in beauty, not their own,
 His glory share.

He sought 'mid dross each precious gem,
 And bought them from His diadem,
 At wondrous cost,
 When all were lost ;
 And though, as yet, their lustre's dim,
 They now, by grace brought nigh to Him,
 His image bear.

In every land the Lord has some
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 And then shall be,
 Eternally,
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