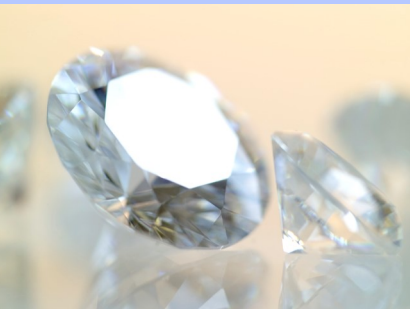


God's Jewels



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*“And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD
of hosts, in that day when I make up
My jewels” Malachi 3:17.*

To whom is God here referring? who are the favoured ones whom He terms His “jewels?” The previous verse tells us, “Then they that feared the LORD spake often one to another: and the LORD hearkened, and heard it, and a book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the LORD, and that thought upon His name.” A twofold description is there given by which the people of God may be identified: they have a reverential awe and profound respect of God’s majesty and authority; they have a deep love and adoration for Him — evidenced by their thinking upon His name.

It almost surprises one to learn that the great and self-sufficient God has “jewels,” but our surprise increases to astonishment when we learn that these “jewels” are living creatures, and astonishment gives place to overwhelming amazement when we discover that these living creatures are fallen and depraved sinners redeemed from among the children of men. Truly, naught but Divine grace would ever liken such wretched worms of the dust unto precious stones. Yet that is the very thing which we find God doing in our text. It is not the unfallen angels, nor the holy seraphim and exalted cherubims who are spoken of as Jehovah’s valued treasure, but lost and ruined sinners saved by amazing grace. Saints are likened unto wheat, fishes, trees, stars, but here to “jewels;” the figure is a deeply interesting and instructive one.

In Isaiah 55:8-9 we read, “For My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways My ways, saith the LORD. For as the heavens are higher than the earth, so are My ways higher than your ways, and My thoughts than your thoughts.” This is seen in the difference between human and Divine estimates of relative values. The world’s standard of worth is

very different from that of God's. Who are the immortals of human history? Caesar, Charlemagne, Napoleon: soldiers and warriors. Among statesmen and politicians we may mention Gladstone and Lincoln: among dramatists, Goethe and Shakespeare. Those were great in the eyes of earth; but who were great in the eyes of Heaven? For the most part they were unknown down here. They were humble and lowly, insignificant in the affairs of the world. Their names were never chronicled among men; *but they were written in the Lamb's Book of Life!*

It is noteworthy that our text is found in the book of Malachi, the last book of the Old Testament, which corresponds in many respects with the character of our days, as we seem to be nearing the end of the New Testament era. As the late C. H. Spurgeon pointed out, "These words were spoken in a very graceless age, when religion was peculiarly distasteful to men; when they scoffed at God's altar, and said of His service, 'What a weariness it is!' and scornfully asked, 'What profit is it that we have kept His ordinance?' Yet even those dark nights were not uncheered by bright stars. Though the house of national worship was often deserted, there were secret conventicles of those who 'feared the Lord,' and who 'spake often one to another,' and our God, who regards quality more than quantity, had respect to these elect twos and threes. He 'hearkened and heard,' and so approved of that which He heard that He takes notes of it, and declared that He will publish it. 'A book of remembrance was written before Him for them that feared the Lord, and that thought upon His name!' Yea, and He valued so much these hidden ones that He called them His 'jewels,' and declared in the great day when He should gather together His retinue, His regalia, the peculiar treasure of kings, He would look upon these hidden

ones as being more priceless than emeralds, rubies, or pearls.”

So it is now when all corporate testimony has broken down, when Christendom is in spiritual ruins. Many of God’s dear children no longer have the privilege of church fellowship, for they dare not attend the modern “synagogues of Satan.” But some of them still have the joy of meeting with little groups of fellow pilgrims, seeking to strengthen one another’s hands as they journey through this wilderness scene. But there are others of God’s “scattered” (John 11:52) saints, who are cut off from practically all (*real* Christian fellowship), isolated ones, who have to mourn with David, “I watch, and am as a sparrow alone upon the house top” (Psa. 102:7). Yet, though they can no longer “speak often one to another,” they still have the holy and blessed privilege of *thinking upon* that Name which is above every name. These, too, shall be numbered among His precious treasure in the day when He shall “make up” His “jewels.”

Let us now endeavour to ponder this beautiful figure, and reverently enquire why the Lord has likened His people to “jewels.”

1. *Because of their inestimable value in His sight.* This is an exceedingly hard thing for the Christian to really grasp, for he feels such a wretched and worthless creature in himself. That the Lord of Glory should deem *him* of any consequence is difficult to conceive, that He regards him as of great worth “passeth knowledge.” Yet so it is. The Scriptures are very plain on this point. They declare, “For the LORD’S portion is His people” (Deut. 32:9). They speak of, “The riches of the glory of His inheritance in the saints” (Eph. 1:18). The Lord Jesus likens His Church unto “one pearl of great price,” so that He “went and sold all that He had, and bought it” (Matt.

13:46).

From the remotest antiquity men have thought much of precious stones, and almost fabulous prices have been paid for them. With great ardour, and toil do men hunt after gold, but with even greater eagerness and labour will they seek the diamond. Hundreds of men will labour for a whole year in one of the diamond mines of Africa, and the entire result of their efforts may be held in the palm of your hand. Princes have been known to barter their estates in order to obtain some gem of peculiar brilliance and rare excellence. More desirable still are His saints in the esteem of the Lord Jesus. The value of a thing in the eyes of its possessor may be gauged by the price he was willing to pay for it. So valuable was the Church unto Christ that He gave *Himself* for it, and shed His “precious blood” to purchase it for Himself. Thus, the saints are likened unto “jewels” because of the great value which the Lord places upon them.

2. *Because of their Divine creation.* “A jewel is the production of God. Diamonds have been burned, and other jewels have been resolved into their elements; but, after the most laborious attempts, no chemist has yet been able to make a diamond. Men can cut the Gordian knot, but they cannot tie it again. Lives have been wasted in attempts to produce precious stones, but the discovery is still unmade; they are the secret productions of God’s own skill, and chemists fail to tell how they are produced, then though they know their elements. So the world thinks it knows what a Christian is, but it cannot make one. All the wit in the world put together could not find out the secret of the heaven-born life; and all the sacraments, vestments, priests, prayers, and paraphernalia of Popery cannot create a Christian. The Lord alone can create a child of grace, and a Christian is as much a

miracle as was Lazarus when he rose from the tomb. It is as great a work of Deity to create a believer as it is to create a world” (C.H. Spurgeon).

This is the basic reason why the saints are precious unto the heart of the Lord Jesus: He regards and receives them as the Father’s workmanship, the Father’s gift unto Him. This comes out, again and again in that wondrous seventeenth chapter of John: “I have manifested Thy name unto the men which *Thou gavest Me* out of the world: Thine they were, and Thou gavest them Me” (verse 6). “I pray for them: I pray not for the world, but for them which *Thou hast given Me*; for they are Thine” (verse 9). From all eternity Christ viewed them in the glass of God’s decrees, and before the foundations of the earth were laid His “delights were with the sons of men” (Prov. 8:31). Because the Father had, by His predestinating purpose, fashioned His elect as vessels “unto *honour*” (Rom. 9:21) the Son prizes them as of infinite value.

3. *Because of their rarity.* It is this, chiefly, which constitutes the value of precious stones. Were they numerous and common, found in the soil of every man’s garden, they would not be so costly, nor so highly esteemed. The number of large diamonds, called paragons, is very small; and so we read, “*Not many* wise men after the flesh, not many mighty, not many noble, are called” (1 Cor. 1:26). Possibly the disparity between diamonds and the pebbles of the brook is no greater than that which exists, numerically, between the regenerate and the unregenerate. The Lord Jesus plainly declared that God’s flock is only a “little” one (Luke 12:32), and that *few* find that narrow way that leadeth unto Life (Matt. 7:14). God had never likened His people unto “jewels” had they been nearly so numerous as is now popularly supposed.

4. *Because of their beauty.* The jewel is prized for its lustre. It is the brilliance of the gem which, in a great measure, is the evidence and test of its value. It is said that the colours of jewels are the brightest known, and are the nearest approaches to the rays of the solar spectrum that have yet been discovered. See how the diamond flashes and sparkles! And yet its beauty and brilliance are not so much inherent. Examine it in a dark room, and it emits no radiance. It is simply a reflector: its glory is borrowed from the light. So it is with the saint: his comeliness is a comeliness which has been placed upon him, imputed to him. “I will greatly rejoice in the LORD, my soul shall be joyful in my God; for *He hath clothed me* with the garments of salvation, *He hath covered me* with the robe of righteousness, as a bridegroom decketh himself with ornaments, and as a bride adorneth herself with her jewels” (Isa. 61:10).

It is very blessed to develop this aspect of our subject. To His disciples the Lord Jesus said, “Ye are the light of the world” (Matt. 5:14), and why are they so? Because He could say “I am the light of the world” (John 8:12). The light of a Christian is a *reflected* one. That supplies the key to that little understood exhortation, “Let your light so shine before men, that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven” (Matt. 5:16): “*so shine*” that *Christ* gets all the glory; “so shine” that we make it clear and plain to all that whatever goodness or righteousness there is in us, and whatever fruits are produced by us, all is *from Christ* as the Root. “For ye were sometimes darkness, but now are ye light in the Lord” (Eph. 5:8) — yes “in the Lord!”

5. *Because of their variety.* Precious stones vary considerably both in colour and in size, kind and value, brilliance and worth. If order is Heaven’s first law, variety is

certainly its second, for there is no uniformity in the ways and works of God, though there is a blessed underlying unity. So it is among gems, all are valuable, but all are not the same. There is the white diamond, the red ruby, the green emerald, the blue sapphire, the violet amethyst. Probably there is not a single ray of the spectrum which is not reflected by some of them. So it is among the saints. All are God's children, all bear the marks of the Divine "workmanship" (Eph. 2:10), all are equally precious to Christ, but all are not alike. Beautifully was this typified of old in the breastplate of Israel's high priest: twelve different precious stones adorned it, representing the tribes of Israel. No two of these gems were alike, but all were equally near to Aaron's heart!

This brings before us an important aspect of the truth which we do well to ponder. What difference we perceive between Thomas and John, between Peter and Paul; yet all were the Apostles of Christ. So it is now among the saints: there is almost endless variety in their capacities, their talents, their growth, the varying graces which they manifest. No one gem reflects *all* the colours of the spectrum, and no one believer exhibits all the excellencies of Christ. As the varied rays of the spectrum are *distributed* among jewels, so the varied excellencies of Christ are distributed among His people: one is conspicuous for meekness, another for courage; one for gentleness, another for firmness; one for patience, another for love. God's people are not all alike, and never will be; and all attempts at uniformity must fail. But it matters little whether we shine with the sapphire's blue, or the emerald's green, or the ruby's red, so long as we are the Lord's on the Day when He makes up His jewels.

6. *Because of their durability.* Precious stones are one of the very few things in this world which, notwithstanding the

flight of time, neither decay nor die; and thus do they strikingly adumbrate in the natural realm that eternal life which pertains to the spiritual world. Diamonds are exceedingly hard: many of them will cut glass, while they cannot be scratched with the sharpest file. Many of them will be uninjured by the most potent acid; they will endure the test of fire; they are practically imperishable. In this also they resemble the Christian, who has within him a principle which is incorruptible, undefiled, and destined to endure forever. The world has often tried to destroy God's people, but all their efforts to do so have been futile. The empty professor, the sham gem, is like a "paste" diamond: it quickly succumbs to trial; but the genuine child of God endures to the end, and shall reign with Christ forever and ever.

7. *Because of their history.* This is very striking indeed, and a separate sermon might well be devoted to enlarging thereon.

First, think of *their lowly origin*. Trees grow in parks and flowers in the garden, but jewels are discovered in the mud and mire of earth. Even the lovely pearl is housed in the rough and unsightly shell of the oyster; while diamonds are found in the deep mines, in the bowels of the earth. What a parable and picture of the joint-heirs with Christ in their *natural* state! each of which has to own, "Behold, I was shapen in iniquity, and in sin did my mother conceive me" (Psa. 51:5). Well did God say to Israel of old, "Look unto the rock whence ye are hewn, and to the *hole of the* pit whence ye are digged" (Isa. 51:1). O the lowly origin of the Christian: "He brought me up also out of an horrible pit, out of the miry clay, and set my feet upon a rock" (Psa. 40:2).

Second, consider the *cutting of them*. As the precious gem has been located and removed from its original position, the

skilful fingers of the lapidary must work upon it. It has to be cut into a proper shape and many facets given to it, for in its original state it is rough and unsymmetrical. So it is with the elect of God. In their natural state they are “darkness” and quite incapable of reflecting the Light. But the Divine Lapidary, the Holy Spirit, after having sought them out, regenerates them. And what is the instrument He employs in this work? Why, the Word of God, which is “quick, and powerful, and *sharper* than any two-edged sword, *piercing* even to the dividing asunder of soul and spirit” (Heb. 4:12). There is the spiritual *cutting* of God’s “jewels.” The “sword of the Spirit” (Eph. 6:17) enters the conscience, searches the heart, cuts down pride, self-will, and self-righteousness.

Third, consider the *polishing of them*. This also forms an important part of the lapidary’s work: he must smooth down the rough edges, and polish each facet so that it may sparkle the more gloriously; and often that is a long and tedious process. Thus it is in the history of the Christian. God does not take him to Glory the moment he is regenerated. No, though a spiritual life has been communicated to him, he needs to pass through many and varied experiences ere he is ripe and ready for Heaven. Ah, does not the spiritual reader perceive what we now have in mind? The reason you are still left in this world is because the Spirit has not yet finished the work of *polishing* your soul; you are not yet ready to be placed among the crown-jewels of the King. Here, then, is a comforting and heartening thought: let us seek to remind ourselves when passing through fiery trials, when smarting under chastisement, that it is part of the polishing process!

8. *Because of their glorious destiny*. “Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the LORD, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God” (Isa. 62:3). What marvellous words

are these — for faith and hope to lay hold of, for our feeble intellects cannot grasp them! Wondrous is it to think of rough stones, which first look like small pebbles, being found in the mud and mire of earth; then cut and polished till they scintillate with a brilliancy surpassing any earthly object, and being given an honoured place in the diadem of a monarch. But infinitely more wonderful is it that poor lost sinners, saved by sovereign grace, should be among the crown-jewels of the Son of God. But He will yet “present us faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy” (Jude 24). Then shall He say to the Father, “The glory which Thou gavest Me I have given them” (John 17:22). Then shall be fulfilled that word, “When He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and *to be admired* in all them that believe” (2 Thess. 1:10).

“And they shall be Mine, saith the LORD of hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels” (Mal. 3:17). That Day has not yet arrived, but it is not far distant: “For yet a little while, and He that shall come will come, and will not tarry” (Heb. 10:37). What is meant by “When I *make up* My jewels?” Is it not when the *complete* number of His redeemed are regenerated and polished? Is it not when He shall descend from Heaven with a shout, resurrect the sleeping saints and transform the living ones and rapture them *together*, so that we shall “ever be with the Lord” (1 Thess. 4:16, 17): “make up” (Mal. 3:17), “caught up” (1 Thess. 4:17)!

Our dear father, now in Heaven, once wrote to us: “Earthly jewels sometimes get separated from their owner, Christ’s jewels never: ‘For I am persuaded, that neither death, nor life . . . nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord’ (Rom. 8:38, 39). Earthly jewels are sometimes lost;

Christ's jewels never: 'I give unto them eternal life; and they shall never perish, neither shall any man pluck them out of My hand' (John 10:28). Earthly jewels are sometimes stolen: Christ's never: 'in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal' (Matt. 6:20)." Are you *sure* that *you* are one of Christ's jewels? Then seek to shine for Him now.



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