

THE JEWELS OF THE LORD

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(Discourse delivered by Bro. Ralph Gaunt, Waco, Texas, Oct 2.5 1969, in convention. Address: 510 Golf Ave. Jackson, Mich. 49203.)

Mal. 3:17m, "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 son that serveth him." (Isa. 62:3. "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." Our Lord is now making up his precious jewels and setting them in a royal diadem--a royal crown. This crown is of purest gold, representing the divine nature, it is set with 144,001 jewels. Each jewel is, for our illustration, a perfect diamond,, but each is cut and polished in a different way, thus each receives and refracts light just a little differently, making the whole crown to shine with the purest light. Zech., 9:16, "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."

Diamonds have a value of their own an intrinsic quality, When the Lord likens his faithful people to precious stones it means that there is an intrinsic value or beauty that he appreciates and it implies also that such characters are, in comparison to the world, very scarce--a "little flock."

A diamond is the hardest natural substance known to man., It is many times harder than corundum, of which ruby and sapphire are formed. It is harder too, than the best man-made abrasives now in use, such as silicon or tungston carbide. Ancients considered this king of stones indestructible. The very word diamond comes from the Greek "adamos", meaning invincible, or unconquerable.

A diamond will cut any other substance--it remains unaffected by the strongest acids, Yet heat it hot enough and it will disappear as a colorless gas, carbon dioxide. Tap it in just the right spot, and it will shatter, The hardness of a diamond may be used to represent character, The hard crystallization corresponds to willingness toward righteousness, in the individual and unless there is such willingness toward righteousness, there is none of the jewel quality which the Lord is now seeking. It is those whose wills are crystallized, set, determined, for righteousness that the Lord is now seeking.

Diamond means invincible or unconquerable--so the Christian should be invincible and unconquerable by sin and unrighteousness. They would have no power over his. A diamond is unaffected by the strongest acids, A Christian whose character is firmly established in righteousness should be impervious to the persecutions and assaults of the worldly. "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you,, and persecute you, and shall say all manner of evil against you falsely for my sake. Rejoice and be exceedingly glad, for great is your reward in heaven." We speak about people making "acid comments" or "acid remarks". Acids can burn deeply into some substances, and can completely dissolve others, but a diamond remains unaffected.

Heat a diamond hot enough and it will disappear as carbon dioxide gas. If the heat of our trials should be more than we can bear, it would destroy us. If our trials were permitted to be too severe we would break under them, and the new creature could even be destroyed--we would have no hope of a future life. But our loving God knows just how much heat to apply and will not suffer us to be tempted beyond what we are able to bear, but with the temptation, provide a way of escape.

Tap a diamond in the right spot, and it will shatter. The pieces are still diamonds but have lost all value-as gems. They can still be put to industrial use, however. The story of the CULLINAN diamond is :interesting in this connection. This huge gem stone is the largest diamond ever to be discovered in the world, and it was unearthed with no more equipment than a pen-knife. One day in 1905, when the three-year-old diggings of the Premier Mine,, in Transvaal, South Africa were simply an open pit some 30 feet deep, the superintendent glimpsed a flash of sunlight just under the crater's lip. He scrambled up to the spot, pried at the earth with his pocket-knife, and soon had freed an incredible chunk of diamond as big as his fist. This stone weighed 3,105 carats-or one pound, six ounces. It was named the CULLINAN for the Mine's discoverer. It was presented by the Transvaal to King Edward VII, who chose a famed Amsterdam diamond cutter, J, Asscher, to cleave the stone. Asscher studied the CULLINAN for months. Finally he made a groove* on one edge, placed his wedge, and, perspiring freely, brought down his hammer. The steel blade broke instead of the diamond, Asscher went to the hospital to recuperate. When his nerves calmed he tried again. This time the stone split perfectly but others had to tell the cutter. At the moment his mallet hit the wedge squarely, Asscher fainted into the arms of his doctor.

A diamond cutter studies a gem for months under a North light. It to said in the Scripture that God dwells in the North. A North light, therefore would aptly represent divine wisdom and knowledge. Our Heavenly Father, the great diamond cutter in this picture, studies us with his Infinite wisdom. He knows our frame--he

knows just the proper way to out and shape us--he knows just how to cut and polish each facet of our character so that it will reflect light most beautifully. The object is to grind away as little of the precious stone as possible in order to get the most brilliance from the gem. This takes a skilled workman. The process of cutting and polishing takes a great skill, else at times most of the value of the stone might be lost through misshaping. For instance, the celebrated Kohinoor diamond originally weighed nearly 800 carats, but in the hands of a poor cutter was reduced to 280 carats. Yet so much of a diamond's value depends on skillful cuttings that it had to be recut to obtain the proper beauty and refractive power, This second cutting reduced its size to 107 carats.

Let us notice some common characteristics of diamonds and see how interestingly they illustrate characteristics possessed by all the Lord's saints. Diamonds are rare, they are precious, they are pure, and they are beautiful. The Lord's saints too, are rare indeed among the teeming millions of earth's society. Our present population of earth is nearly three thousand millions, and how few of these could be termed the Lord's jewels. Rare indeed is a saint who has seen the vision of Truth, and in faithful consecration is yielding himself daily to the Father's will. To illustrate how few are the true disciples of the master, let us suppose that each year from Pentecost until now, an equal number made their calling and election sure. We would arrive at a small group of about seventy brethren each year being assured of their heavenly crowns, out of the millions of earth's people. Realizing how few there have been during this Gospel Age, should fill us with deep gratitude for the privilege of knowing the Truth and hearing the call to be saints.

Diamonds are precious. As a man seeks and treasures precious stones, so the Lord is seeking his precious jewels. Can we really understand that we are precious to Him? His domain reaches in all directions to the far sweep of space and eternity. His power and wisdom can instantly create, and yet, when he speaks of his "special treasure," his gaze passes by the great multitude of heavenly hosts, down to the earth--and in this sin-sick and dark world, has seen the occasional jewel, reflecting his glory. These he calls his "precious" ones. As the Psalmist declares, "precious in the sight of the Lord is the death of his saints." The death of the saint referred to here is not that final scene when he gasps out the last remaining earthly breath. Instead, the death mentioned here refers to the "baptism into death" which spans the entire consecrated life of the saints. That death is the faithful walk in self-sacrifice and devotion to God. It is that sacrificial walk of loving obedience that the Lord calls "precious."

Diamonds are pure. Only the purest of stones go for gem uses, the remainder are called industrial diamonds. The Lord's Jewels are to become pure. We know that we cannot reach perfection this side of the veil--yet perfect heart intentions are required of us. The first duty of the child of God is to separate himself from the contaminating elements of the world in which he is found. "Come out from among them, and be ye separate, saith the Lord, and touch not the unclean thing; and I will receive you." By the Father's help, we attempt to cleanse ourselves, and particularly our hearts. Thus feeding upon the Truths, we begin to see the true values of love--and as we yield ourselves in sacrifice, prompted by this love, our hearts tend to become crystallized in righteousness. Of necessity, we are covered by the robe of Christ's righteousness, and therefore God can look upon us as pure.

Diamonds are beautiful. How often the clear sparkle of a diamond set in a ring or ornament catches our eye, and almost without thinking we follow its every movement. We are fascinated by the way the facets reflect the varying colors of the rays of light that fall upon them. Often a large, well-cut diamond seem to possess an inner light apart from that which strikes it. This, of course, is not true, for no gem possesses light within itself, but with expert and skilled cutting, it can be made to reflect light so perfectly that it appears to possess the light. So with us, a life of consecration and devotion will radiate the glory of God. But apart from God we are nothing, even as the beauty and brilliance of a diamond darkens and dies when taken from the light. To reflect the glory of our Father necessitates our being sincere, or pure in heart desire and intent. Paul says we could give all our money for the benefit of others,, and our body to be burned, but if love is not the motivating principle, it profits us nothing. One of the primary ways of reflecting the glory of God is by witnessing about him and his-plan of salvation--for the glory of his character shines through his plan. The Lord's jewels must always remember that any glory that shines from them comes from a gracious Father. Our few attainments in righteousness come from tender leadings, divine love and patience. The glorious truth we hold forth is his truth, revealed to us -- "What hast thou that thou hast not received?"

The Lord's saints will not necessarily be recognized by the world as jewels. To the worlds these saints are like the poem which reads:

"Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear;
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air."

But none of the heavenly jewels are unnoticed before the Heavenly Father! For him to see them does not necessitate that they loom LARGE before the brethren. As the Father watches his precious jewels, that which is especially APPROVED is the HEART LOVINGLY DEDICATED TO THE DOING OF- HIS WILL.

But where did these precious stones come from, and how did they become . . .Jewels?, Africa produces 97 of every 100 Carats of diamonds found in the world. Put another way, the current annual world production of some 23 million carats would fill about 75 bushel baskets--African diamonds would account for 73 of these. Africa is called the "dark Continent." Egypt, which in the Scriptures is used as a type of the world and sin, is in the continent of Africa. Therefore, it is a fitting illustration of the world in its present evil condition. A curse was placed upon the earth because of man's disobedience. Yet, it is in this very continent (Africa) that the most priceless gems are found.

In the 139th Psalm, David is speaking prophetically of the Church--the Lord's jewels. Verses 14 to 16 read, "I will praise thee; for I am fearfully and wonderfully made: marvelous are thy works; and that my soul knoweth right well. My substance was not hid from thee, when I was made in secret, and curiously wrought in the lowest parts of the earth. Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect; and in thy book all my members were written, which in continuance were fashioned, when as yet there was none of them." Africa is a very fitting symbol of the expression "in the lowest parts of the earth."

A diamond is nothing but pure carbon--the same basic element that form coal, graphite, lampblack, and common soot. But in this case the carbon was forged by giant pressure and deep heat in the earth. "Thine eyes did see my substance, yet being unperfect." There is nothing useful in common soot—soft, black dirty carbon. But it is this very element, when heat and pressure are applied to it in the depths of the earth that forms the purest gem. The gem quality of a Christian is formed by symbolic heat and pressure, thus crystallizing their desire for righteousness--thus forming their strength of character. The last two verses of this 139th Psalm illustrate this beautifully--"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." In other words, purge out all of the "soot" element and thus form the "gem" element.

But this gem stone first must be blasted from the birthplace deep in the bedrock of South Africa. The Christian usually is broken from its surrounding element by some severe experience. After being blasted from the bedrock the ore is carried

into a steel-jawed crusher built on solid bedrock in the depths of the mine. It is difficult for the Christian to separate himself from the world. Many of these crushing experiences come from the world and its influence upon us.

Broken to the size of eggs, the bluish ore is sent to the separation plant on the surface. Here a chain of dancing screens, other crushers, whirling vats, and conveyors pass it along. It takes all of these varied experiences to separate the Christian from the worldly element--the gravel. But yet, these experiences alone will not separate him--he must, as the conveyor pushes him along, find something to hold on to. The diamond, in this form, possesses a peculiar affinity for grease. Thus when the ore is carried across the sticky coating of the recovery table, the diamonds adhere to it, but the useless gravel passes on,

This recovery table well represents the promises of God. The Christian in his experiences of being separated from the gravel element of society is brought in contact with the promises of God. The diamond character will grasp hold of these promises, while the gravel character takes no heed, but passes right on by. For a single carat of diamonds an average of 6,000 pounds of worthless gravel are processed. It is like digging up your back yard with a steam shovel to find a button. We might think it strange that this sticky grease on the recovery table could represent such a beautiful thing as the promises of God. And yet, to the gravel element, the world, are these promises looked upon as beautiful? The sticky grease is very appropriate for this illustration. The diamond has a peculiar affinity for it--like the steel has for a magnet. But to the gravel elements these promises appear as a trap to deprive them of their freedom--to bind them to an organization--or, to use the illustration. they are afraid they'll get stuck.

Next, after being separated from the gravel, these rough uncut gems are scraped off the grease table and washed. The first duty of a Christian when once he sees and appreciates the plans and promises of God is to cleanse himself. 2 Cor. 7:1, "Having therefore these promises, dearly beloved, let us cleanse ourselves from all filthiness of the flesh and spirit, perfecting holiness in the fear of God." I John 3:3, "And every man that hath this hope in him, purifieth himself, even as he is pure." But the Christian is unable to wash himself sufficiently to be presentable to God. Our Lord Jesus, as our high priests completes the cleansing before we are presented for sacrifice. Psalm 51:1-3 and 7-9, "Have mercy upon me, O God, according to thy lovingkindness; according unto the multitude of thy tender mercies blot out my transgressions. Wash me thoroughly from mine iniquity, cleanse so from my sin. For I acknowledge my transgressions; and my sin is ever before me. . . Purge me with hyssop, and I shall be clean; wash me, and I shall be

whiter than snow. Make me to hear joy and gladness; that the bones which thou hast broken may rejoice. Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." Heb. 10:22, Let us draw near with a true heart in full assurance of faith, having our hearts sprinkled from an evil conscience, and our bodies washed with pure water."

The diamonds now washed but still uncut and unpolished- are-sold to the dealer at prices which stagger our imagination. 2 Cor: 8:9. "For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich." We cannot fully comprehend the great price which was paid that we might have life. Our Lord Jesus left the riches of glory and honor and power, and came to earth to die as a substitute for sinners. It was truly a price which staggers our imagination. After purchasing these gems, the dealer takes them to a diamond cutter, The cutter studies each diamond carefully. Some large stones require months of study to determine the grain and the cutting pattern. The grain of a diamond is composed of triangular pyramid shapes--thus a diamond can only be cleaved in 4 directions. If it is split in any other direction, it will shatter. Thus the four attributes of Jehovah—wisdom, justice, love and power, all come into play in the shaping of these precious gems of Christian character. If a Christian gem were cut out of line with these four attributes it would shatter and lose its gem quality. But we can have faith in the Master Cutter--that his wisdom, justice, love and power will always be used in directing all of our experiences.

The cutting, grinding and polishing of a single diamond sometimes taken as long as a year. Thus with the Christian,, it sometimes takes the greater part of a lifetime for this cutting, shaping and polishing of the character to be completed. Sometimes a diamond cannot be cleaved along its natural grain because the necessary cut does not fall on this line. When this happens, the stone must be sawed. This is done with a paper-thin phosphor-bronze disk whose edge has been charged with diamond dust mixed in olive oil. This disk spinning at high speed, sometimes takes weeks to make a necessary cut. So with the Christian--sometimes the shaping of our character into the form that the Lord would require goes against the natural grain. We cannot be easily cleaved but must require laborious sawing. This sawing is done with particles of other diamonds mixed with olive oil. Some of these severe cutting experiences come from the brethren for it takes a diamond to cut a diamond. The olive oil used in this cutting process is for the purpose of lubrication. Thus it represents Christian love. In all of our experiences with the brethren, if love rules and controls the situation, the experiences are never so severe as to cause damage to the new creature, The purpose of lubrication is to

reduce heat caused by friction. We know that the heat of our trials will never be so severe as to destroy us if LOVE is present.

After the cutting and shaping is done, a diamond is then ready for the grinding of the facets. The purpose of the many facets is to bring out the gem's inner brilliance and beauty; to enhance its ability to reflect and refract light; to break up light into its rainbow colors. To do this the stone is placed between large mechanical pincers that hold it against the face of the grinding wheel. This stone must be readjusted again and again as the wheel slowly grinds away the rough corners and thus forms the beautiful facets. Thus our loving Heavenly Father knows just how such pressure to bring to bear against the grinding wheel of experience in order to make us most beautiful in his sight. The pincers could represent his Holy Spirit or Influence, carefully, yet firmly guiding us in each experience. Then one by one come the facets--gentleness, patience, kindness, courteousness, sincerity, etc., until the gem, when turned, shows a balanced cutting and polishing of all the graces of love, reflecting the goodness of God.

When the royal crown was worn by the queen at her coronations, the general public did not see it except on T.V. Its beauty was seen only by the royal guests and officials who were participants and spectators of the ceremony. So the beauty of this royal diadem, with its 144,001 precious gems will never be seen by mankind. However, just as the rulership of the queen affects the whole nation, so the influence of this royal diadem in the hand of God will be felt and enjoyed by all mankind. The Heavenly Father is now making up his jewels. As each precious stone is completed it is silently, unknown to man, being placed into this royal diadem, "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." "Thou shalt also be a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God."

*True Christians are like jewels 'tis said, For they are rare indeed. While found among earth's mud and clay, The world does not take heed. *But jewels must bear the cutter's hand, Before their beauty rare, Breaks forth in fullest brilliance; Lovely beyond compare. *Then think not strange when'er we feel, The Master's Cutter's hand, Pressing us hard against the wheel, Of trial or reprimand. *Know that he loves us far too much, To cause us needless pain. His wisdom knows just what we need. Let us ne'er complain. *For when the Jewel is fully cut, And polished bright and clear, We will reflect the perfect image, Of our Father dear. *When in a crown of purest gold, We shine as diamonds fair; Hold within the Father's hands, His glory we'll declare.