

---

EXODUS 28:1 "Bring Aaron your brother, and his sons with him, near to you from among the children of Israel, that he may minister to me in the priest's office, even Aaron, Nadab and Abihu, Eleazar and Ithamar, Aaron's sons.

---

Aaron and his sons are set apart for the priest's office, Exo 28:1. Garments to be provided for them, Exo 28:2, Exo 28:3. What these garments were, Exo 28:4, and of what made, Exo 28:5. The ephod, its shoulder-pieces, and girdle, Exo 28:6-8. The two onyx stones, on which the names of the twelve tribes were to be engraven, Exo 28:9-14. The breastplate of judgment; its twelve precious stones, engraving, rings, chains, and its use, Exo 28:15-29. The Urim and Thummim, Exo 28:30. The robe of the ephod, its border, bells, pomegranates, etc., and their use, Exo 28:31-35. The plate of pure gold and its motto, Exo 28:36, to be placed on Aaron's mitre, Exo 28:37, Exo 28:38. The embroidered coat for Aaron, Exo 28:39. Coats, girdles, and bonnets, Exo 28:40. Aaron and his sons to be anointed for the priest's office, Exo 28:41. Other articles of clothing and their use, Exo 28:42, Exo 28:43.

#### Verse 1

Aaron - and his sons - The priesthood was to be restrained to this family because the public worship was to be confined to one place; and previously to this the eldest in every family officiated as priest, there being no settled place of worship. It has been very properly observed that, if Moses had not acted by the Divine appointment, he would not have passed by his own family, which continued in the condition of ordinary Levites, and established the priesthood, the only dignity in the nation, in the family of his brother Aaron. "The priests, however, had no power of a secular nature, nor does it appear from history that they ever arrived at any till the time of the Asmoneans or Maccabees." See Clarke's note on Exo 19:22.

---

EXODUS 28:2 You shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, for glory and for beauty.

---

#### Verse 2

For glory and for beauty - Four articles of dress were prescribed for the priests in ordinary, and four more for the high-priest. Those for the priests in general were a coat, drawers, a girdle, and a bonnet. Besides these the high-priest had a robe, an ephod, a breastplate, and a plate or diadem of gold on his forehead. The garments, says the sacred historian, were for honor and for beauty. They were emblematical of the office in which they ministered.

1. It was honorable. They were the ministers of the Most High, and employed by him in transacting the most important concerns between God and his people, concerns in which all the attributes of the Divine Being were interested, as well as those which referred to the present and eternal happiness of his creatures.

2. They were for beauty. They were emblematical of that holiness and purity which ever characterize the Divine nature and the worship which is worthy of him, and which are essentially necessary to all those who wish to serve him in the beauty of holiness here below, and without which none can ever see his face in the realms of glory. Should not the garments of all those who minister in holy things still be emblematical of the things in which they minister? Should they not be for glory and beauty,

expressive of the dignity of the Gospel ministry, and that beauty of holiness without which none can see the Lord? As the high-priest's vestments, under the law, were emblematical of what was to come, should not the vestments of the ministers of the Gospel bear some resemblance of what is to come? Is then the dismal black, now worn by almost all kinds of priests and ministers, for glory and for beauty? Is it emblematical of any thing that is good, glorious, or excellent? How unbecoming the glad tidings announced by Christian ministers is a color emblematical of nothing but mourning and woe, sin, desolation, and death! How inconsistent the habit and office of these men! Should it be said, "These are only shadows, and are useless because the substance is to come." I ask, Why then is black almost universally worn? why is a particular color preferred, if there be no signification in any? Is there not a danger that in our zeal against shadows, we shall destroy or essentially change the substance itself? Would not the same sort of argumentation exclude water in baptism, and bread and wine in the sacrament of the Lord's Supper? The white surplice in the service of the Church is almost the only thing that remains of those ancient and becoming vestments, which God commanded to be made for glory and beauty. Clothing, emblematical of office, is of more consequence than is generally imagined. Were the great officers of the crown, and the great officers of justice, to clothe themselves like the common people when they appear in their public capacity, both their persons and their decisions would be soon held in little estimation.

---

EXODUS 28:3 You shall speak to all who are wise-hearted, whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom, that they make Aaron's garments to sanctify him, that he may minister to me in the priest's office.

---

### Verse 3

Whom I have filled with the spirit of wisdom - So we find that ingenuity in arts and sciences, even those of the ornamental kind, comes from God. It is not intimated here that these persons were filled with the spirit of wisdom for this purpose only; for the direction to Moses is, to select those whom he found to be expert artists, and those who were such, God shows by these words, had derived their knowledge from himself. Every man should be permitted as far as possible to follow the bent or direction of his own genius, when it evidently leads him to new inventions, and improvements on old plans. How much has both the labor of men and cattle been lessened by improvements in machinery! And can we say that the wisdom which found out these improvements did not come from God? No man, by course of reading or study, ever acquired a genius of this kind: we call it natural, and say it was born with the man. Moses teaches us to consider it as Divine. Who taught Newton to ascertain the laws by which God governs the universe, through which discovery a new source of profit and pleasure has been opened to mankind through every part of the civilized world? No reading, no study, no example, formed his genius. God, who made him, gave him that compass and bent of mind by which he made those discoveries, and for which his name is celebrated in the earth. When I see Napier inventing the logarithms; Copernicus, Des Cartes, and Kepler contributing to pull down the false systems of the universe, and Newton demonstrating the true one; and when I see the long list of Patentees of useful inventions, by whose industry and skill long and tedious processes in the necessary arts of life have been shortened, labor greatly lessened, and much time and expense saved; I then see, with Moses, men who are wise-hearted, whom God has filled with the spirit of wisdom for these very purposes; that he might help man by man, and that, as time rolls on, he might give to his intelligent creatures such proofs of his Being, infinitely varied

wisdom, and gracious providence, as should cause them to depend on him, and give him that glory which is due to his name.

How pointedly does the Prophet Isaiah refer to this sort of teaching as coming from God, even in the most common and less difficult arts of life! The whole passage is worthy of the reader's most serious attention. "Doth the ploughman plough all day to sow? doth he open and break the clods of his ground? When he hath made plain the face thereof, doth he not cast abroad the fitches, and scatter the cummin, and cast in the principal wheat, and the appointed barley, and the rye, in their place? For His God Doth Instruct Him to discretion, and doth teach him. For the fitches are not threshed with a threshing-instrument, neither is a cart-wheel turned about upon the cummin; but the fitches are beaten out with a staff, and the cummin with a rod. Bread corn is bruised; because he will not ever be threshing it, nor break it with the wheel of his cart, nor bruise it with his horsemen. This also cometh forth from the Lord of hosts, who is wonderful in counsel, and excellent in working," Isa 28:24-29.

But let us take heed not to run into extremes here; machinery is to help man, not to render him useless. The human hand is the great and most perfect machine, let it not be laid aside. In our zeal for machinery we are rendering all the lower classes useless; filling the land with beggary and vice, and the workhouses with paupers; and ruining the husbandmen with oppressive poor-rates. Keep machinery as a help to the human hand, and to lighten the labor, but never let it supersede either.

This principle, that God is the author of all arts and sciences, is too little regarded: Every good gift, and every perfect gift, says St. James, comes from above, from the Father of Lights. Why has God constructed every part of nature with such a profusion of economy and skill, if he intended this skill should never be discovered by man, or that man should not attempt to examine his works in order to find them out? From the works of Creation what proofs, astonishing and overwhelming proofs, both to believers and infidels, have been drawn both of the nature, being, attributes, and providence of God! What demonstrations of all these have the Archbishop of Cambray, Dr. Nieuwentyt, Dr. Derham, and Mr. Charles Bonnet, given in their philosophical works! And who gave those men this wisdom? God, from whom alone Mind, and all its attributes, proceed. While we see Count de Buffon and Swammerdam examining and tracing out all the curious relations, connections, and laws of the Animal kingdom; - Tournefort, Ray, and Linne, those of the Vegetable; - Theophrastus, Werner, Klaproth, Cronstedt, Morveau, Reamur, Kirwan, and a host of philosophical chemists, Boerhaave, Boyle, Stahl, Priestley, Lavoisier, Fourcroy, Black, and Davy, those of the Mineral; the discoveries they have made, the latent and important properties of vegetables and minerals which they have developed, the powerful machines which, through their discoveries, have been constructed, by the operations of which the human slave is restored to his own place in society, the brute saved from his destructive toil in our manufactories, and inanimate, unfeeling Nature caused to perform the work of all these better, more expeditiously, and to much more profit; shall we not say that the hand of God is in all this? Only I again say, let machinery aid man, and not render him useless. The nations of Europe are pushing mechanical power to a destructive extreme. He alone girded those eminent men, though many of them knew him not; he inspired them with wisdom and understanding; by his all-pervading and all-informing spirit he opened to them the entrance of the paths of the depths of science, guided them in their researches, opened to them successively more and more of his astonishing treasures, crowned their persevering industry with his blessing and made them his ministers for good to mankind. The antiquary and the medalist are also his agents; their discernment and penetration come from him alone. By them, how many dark ages of the world have been brought to light; how many names of men and places, how many customs and arts, that were lost, restored! And by their means a few busts, images, stones, bricks, coins,

rings, and culinary utensils, the remaining wrecks of long-past numerous centuries have supplied the place of written documents, and cast a profusion of light on the history of man, and the history of providence. And let me add, that the providence which preserved these materials, and raised up men to decipher and explain them, is itself gloriously illustrated by them.

Of all those men (and the noble list might be greatly swelled) we may say the same that Moses said of Bezaleel and Aholiab: "God hath filled them with the Spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge; and in all manner of workmanship, to devise cunning works; to work in gold and in silver, and in brass, in cutting of stones, carving of timber, and in all manner of workmanship;" Exo 31:3-6. "The works of the Lord are great, sought out of all them that have pleasure therein;" Psa 111:2.

EXODUS 28:4 These are the garments which they shall make: a breastplate, and an ephod, and a robe, and a coat of checker work, a turban, and a sash: and they shall make holy garments for Aaron your brother, and his sons, that he may minister to me in the priest's office.

#### Verse 4

Breastplate - חֹשֶׁן choshen. See Clarke on Exo 25:7 (note).

Ephod - אֶפֶד. See Clarke's note on Exo 25:7.

Robe - מֵעִיל meil, from עלה alah, to go up, go upon; hence the meil may be considered as an upper coat, a surtout. It is described by Josephus as a garment that reaches down to the feet, not made of two distinct pieces, but was one entire long garment, woven throughout. This was immediately under the ephod. See Clarke on Exo 28:31 (note), etc.

Broidered coat - כֶּתֹנֶת תְּשֻׁבֵץ kethoneth, tashbets, what Parkhurst translates a close, strait coat or garment; according to Josephus, "a tunic circumscribing or closely encompassing the body, and having tight sleeves for the arms." This was immediately under the meil or robe, and answered the same purpose to the priests that our shirts do to us. See Clarke on Exo 28:13 (note).

Mitre - מִצְנֶפֶת mitsnepheth. As this word comes from the root צָנַף tsanaph, to roll or wrap round, it evidently means that covering of the head so universal in the eastern countries which we call turban or turband, corrupted from the Persian doolbend, which signifies what encompasses and binds the head or body; and hence is applied, not only to this covering of the head, but to a sash in general. As the Persian word is compounded of dool, or dawal, a revolution, vicissitude, wheel, etc., and binden, to bind; it is very likely that the Hebrew words דֹּר dur, to go round, and בֶּנֶת benet, a band, may have been the original of doolbend and turband. It is sometimes called serbend, from ser, the head, and binden, to bind. The turban consists generally of two parts: the cap, which goes on the head; and the long sash of muslin, linen, or silk, that is wrapped round the head. These sashes are generally several yards in length.

A girdle - אֲבֵנֶת abnet, a belt or girdle; see before. This seems to have been the same kind of sash or girdle, so common in the eastern countries, that confined the loose garments about the waist; and in which their long skirts were tucked up when they were employed in work, or on a journey. After being tied round the waist, the two ends of it fell down before, to the skirts of their robes.

EXODUS 28:5 They shall take the gold, and the blue, and the purple, and the scarlet, and the fine linen.

EXODUS 28:6 "They shall make the ephod of gold, of blue, and purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, the work of the skilful workman.

EXODUS 28:7 It shall have two shoulder straps joined to the two ends of it, that it may be joined together.

EXODUS 28:8 The skilfully woven band, which is on it, that is on him, shall be like its work and of the same piece; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen.

#### Verse 8

The curious girdle of the ephod - The word **חֶשֶׁב** chesheb, rendered here curious girdle, signifies merely a kind of diaper, or embroidered work; (see Clarke's note on Exo 26:1); and it is widely different from **אַבְנֵט** abnet, which is properly translated girdle Exo 28:4. The meaning therefore of the text, according to some, is this, that the two pieces, Exo 28:7, which connected the parts of the ephod at the shoulders where the onyx stones were set, should be of the same texture with the ephod itself, i.e., of gold, blue, purple, scarlet, and fine twined linen, embroidered together. But others suppose that some kind of a girdle is meant, different from the abnet, Exo 28:39, being only of plain workmanship.

EXODUS 28:9 You shall take two onyx stones, and engrave on them the names of the children of Israel:

#### Verse 9

Two onyx stones - See Clarke on Exo 25:7 (note).

EXODUS 28:10 six of their names on the one stone, and the names of the six that remain on the other stone, in the order of their birth.

EXODUS 28:11 With the work of an engraver in stone, like the engravings of a signet, you shall engrave the two stones, according to the names of the children of Israel: you shall make them to be enclosed in settings of gold.

#### Verse 11

Like the engravings of a signet - So signets or seals were in use at this time, and engraving on precious stones was then an art, and this art, which was one of the most elegant and ornamental, was carried in ancient times to a very high pitch of perfection, and particularly among the ancient Greeks; such a pitch of perfection as has never been rivaled, and cannot now be even well imitated. And it is very likely that the Greeks themselves borrowed this art from the ancient Hebrews, as we know it flourished in Egypt and Palestine long before it was known in Greece.

---

EXODUS 28:12 You shall put the two stones on the shoulder straps of the ephod, to be stones of memorial for the children of Israel: and Aaron shall bear their names before the LORD on his two shoulders for a memorial.

---

Verse 12

Aaron shall bear their names before the Lord - He was to consider that he was the representative of the children of Israel; and the stones on the ephod and the stones on the breastplate were for a memorial to put Aaron in remembrance that he was the priest and mediator of the twelve tribes; and, speaking after the manner of men, God was to be put in mind of the children of Israel, their wants, etc., as frequently as the high priest appeared before him with the breastplate and the ephod. See Exo 28:29.

---

EXODUS 28:13 You shall make settings of gold,

---

Verse 13

Ouches of gold - מִשְׁבְּצוֹת mishbetsoth, strait places, sockets to insert the stones in, from שָׁבַץ shabats, to close, enclose, straiten.

Socket, in this place, would be a more proper translation, as ouch cannot be traced up to any legitimate authority. It appears sometimes to signify a hook, or some mode of attaching things together.

---

EXODUS 28:14 and two chains of pure gold; you shall make them like cords of braided work: and you shall put the braided chains on the settings.

EXODUS 28:15 "You shall make a breastplate of judgment, the work of the skilful workman; like the work of the ephod you shall make it; of gold, of blue, and purple, and scarlet, and fine twined linen, you shall make it.

---

Verse 15

The breastplate of judgment - חֹשֶׁן מִשְׁפָּט choshen mishpat, the same as the חֹשֶׁן choshen, see Exo 25:7, but here called the breastplate of judgment, because the high priest wore it upon his breast when he went to ask counsel of the Lord, to give judgment in any particular case; as also when he sat as judge to teach the law, and to determine controversies. See Lev 10:11; Deu 17:8, Deu 17:9.

---

EXODUS 28:16 It shall be square and folded double; a span shall be its length of it, and a span its breadth.

---

## Verse 16

Four-square it shall be - Here we have the exact dimensions of this breastplate, or more properly breast-piece or stomacher. It was a span in length and breadth when doubled, and consequently two spans long one way before it was doubled. Between these doublings, it is supposed, the Urim and Thummim were placed. See Clarke on Exo 28:30 (note).

EXODUS 28:17 You shall set in it settings of stones, four rows of stones: a row of ruby, topaz, and beryl shall be the first row;

## Verse 17

Four rows of stones - With a name on each stone, making in all the twelve names of the twelve tribes. And as these were disposed according to their birth, Exo 28:10, we may suppose they stood in this order, the stones being placed also in the order in which they are produced, Exo 28:17-20 : -

Four Rows of Stones First Row Sons of Leah Sardius or Ruby Reuben ראובן Topaz Simeon שמעון Carbuncle Levi לוי Second Row Emerald Judah יהודה Sapphire Issachar יששכר Diamond Zebulun זבולן Third Row Sons of Bilhah, Rachael's maid Ligure or Jacinth Dan דן Agate Naphtali נפתלי Son of Zilpah, Leah's maid Amethyst Gad גד Fourth Row Beryl or Chrysolite Asher אשר Sons of Rachel Onyx, or Sardonyx Joseph יוסף Jasper Benjamin בנימין

In this order the Jews in general agree to place them. See the Jerusalem Targum on this place, and the Targum upon Sol 5:14; and see also Ainsworth. The Targum of Jonathan says, "These four rows were placed opposite to the four quarters of the world; but this could only be when laid down horizontally, for when it hung on the breast of the high priest it could have had no such position. As it is difficult to ascertain in every case what these precious stones were, it may be necessary to consider this subject more at large.

1. A Sardius, מַדְם, su odem, from the root adam, he was ruddy; the ruby, a beautiful gem of a fine deep red color. The sardius, or sardie stones, is defined to be a precious stone of a blood-red color, the best of which come from Babylon.
2. A Topaz, פִּטְדָה, pitdah, a precious stone of a pale dead green, with a mixture of yellow, sometimes of a fine yellow; and hence it was called chrysolite by the ancients, from its gold color. It is now considered by mineralogists as a variety of the sapphire.
3. Carbuncle, בַּרְקֵת, bareketh, from בָּרַק, barak, to lighten, glitter, or glister; a very elegant gem of a deep red color, with an admixture of scarlet. From its bright lively color it had the name carbunculus, which signifies a little coal; and among the Greeks ἀνθραξ anthrax, a coal, because when held before the sun it appears like a piece of bright burning charcoal. It is found only in the East Indies, and there but rarely.
4. Emerald, נֹפֶךְ, nophech, the same with the ancient smaragdus; it is one of the most beautiful of all the gems, and is of a bright green color, without any other mixture. The true oriental emerald is very scarce, and is only found at present in the kingdom of Cambay.
5. Sapphire, סַפִּיר, sappir. See this described, Exo 24:10.

6. Diamond, יהלם yahalom, from הלהם halam, to beat or smite upon. The diamond is supposed to have this name from its resistance to a blow, for the ancients have assured us that if it be struck with a hammer, upon an anvil, it will not break, but either break them or sink into the surface of that which is softest. This is a complete fable, as it is well known that the diamond can be easily broken, and is capable of being entirely volatilized or consumed by the action of fire. It is, however, the hardest, as it is the most valuable, of all the precious stones hitherto discovered, and one of the most combustible substances in nature.

7. Ligure, לשם leshem, the same as the jacinth or hyacinth; a precious stone of a dead red or cinnamon color, with a considerable mixture of yellow.

8. Agate, שבו shebo. This is a stone that assumes such a variety of hues and appearances, that Mr. Parkhurst thinks it derives its name from the root שב shab, to turn, to change, "as from the circumstance of the agate changing its appearance without end, it might be called the varier." Agates are met with so variously figured in their substance, that they seem to represent the sky, the stars, clouds, earth, water, rocks, villages, fortifications, birds, trees, flowers, men, and animals of different kinds. Agates have a white, reddish, yellowish, or greenish ground. They are only varieties of the flint, and the lowest in value of all the precious stones.

9. Amethyst, אחלמה achlamah, a gem generally of a purple color, composed of a strong blue and deep red. The oriental amethyst is sometimes of a dove color, though some are purple, and others white like diamonds. The name amethyst is Greek, ἀμέθυστος, and it was so called because it was supposed that it prevented inebriation.

10. The Beryl, תרשיש tarshish. Mr. Parkhurst derives this name from תר tar, to go round, and שש shash, to be vivid or bright in color. If the beryl be intended, it is a pellucid gem of a bluish green color, found in the East Indies, and about the gold mines of Peru. But some of the most learned mineralogists and critics suppose the chrysolite to be meant. This is a gem of a yellowish green color, and ranks at present among the topazes. Its name in Greek, chrysolite, χρυσολιθος, literally signifies the golden stone.

11. The Onyx, שהם shoham. See Clarke's note on Gen 2:12; See Clarke's note on Exo 25:7. There are a great number of different sentiments on the meaning of the original; it has been translated beryl, emerald, prasius, sapphire, sardius, ruby, cornelian, onyx, and sardonyx. It is likely that the name may signify both the onyx and sardonyx. This latter stone is a mixture of the chalcedony and cornelian, sometimes in strata, at other times blended together, and is found striped with white and red strata or layers. It is generally allowed that there is no real difference, except in the degree of hardness, between the onyx, cornelian, chalcedony, sardonyx, and agate. It is well known that the onyx is of a darkish horny color, resembling the hoof or nail, from which circumstance it has its name. It has often a plate of a bluish white or red in it, and when on one or both sides of this white there appears a plate of a reddish color, the jewelers, says Woodward, call the stone a sardonyx.

12. Jasper, ישפה yashepheh. The similarity of the Hebrew name has determined most critics and mineralogists to adopt the jasper as intended by the original word. The jasper is usually defined a hard stone, of a beautiful bright green color, sometimes clouded with white, and spotted with red or yellow. Mineralogists reckon not less than fifteen varieties of this stone: 1. green; 2. red; 3. yellow; 4. brown; 5. violet; 6. black; 7. bluish grey; 8. milky white; 9. variegated with green, red, and yellow clouds; 10. green with red specks; 11. veined with various colors, apparently in the form of letters; 12. with variously coloured zones; 13. with various colors mixed without any order; 14. with many



colors together; 15. mixed with particles of agate. It can scarcely be called a precious stone; it is rather a dull opaque rock.

In examining what has been said on these different precious stones by the best critics, I have adopted such explanations as appeared to me to be best justified by the meaning and use of the original words; but I cannot say that the stones which I have described are precisely those intended by the terms in the Hebrew text, nor can I take upon me to assert that the tribes are arranged exactly in the manner intended by Moses; for as these things are not laid down in the text in such a way as to preclude all mistake, some things must be left to conjecture. Of several of these stones many fabulous accounts are given by the ancients, and indeed by the moderns also: these I have in general omitted because they are fabulous; as also all spiritual meanings which others have found so plentifully in each stone, because I consider some of them puerile, all futile, and not a few dangerous.

---

EXODUS 28:18 and the second row a turquoise, a sapphire, and an emerald;

EXODUS 28:19 and the third row a jacinth, an agate, and an amethyst;

EXODUS 28:20 and the fourth row a chrysolite, an onyx, and a jasper: they shall be enclosed in gold in their settings.

EXODUS 28:21 The stones shall be according to the names of the children of Israel, twelve, according to their names; like the engravings of a signet, everyone according to his name, they shall be for the twelve tribes.

EXODUS 28:22 You shall make on the breastplate chains like cords, of braided work of pure gold.

EXODUS 28:23 You shall make on the breastplate two rings of gold, and shall put the two rings on the two ends of the breastplate.

EXODUS 28:24 You shall put the two braided chains of gold in the two rings at the ends of the breastplate.

EXODUS 28:25 The other two ends of the two braided chains you shall put on the two settings, and put them on the shoulder straps of the ephod in its forepart.

EXODUS 28:26 You shall make two rings of gold, and you shall put them on the two ends of the breastplate, on its edge, which is toward the side of the ephod inward.

EXODUS 28:27 You shall make two rings of gold, and shall put them on the two shoulder straps of the ephod underneath, in its forepart, close by its coupling, above the skilfully woven band of the ephod.

EXODUS 28:28 They shall bind the breastplate by its rings to the rings of the ephod with a lace of blue, that it may be on the skilfully woven band of the ephod, and that the breastplate may not swing out from the ephod.

EXODUS 28:29 Aaron shall bear the names of the children of Israel in the breastplate of judgement on his heart, when he goes in to the holy place, for a memorial before the LORD continually.

EXODUS 28:30 You shall put in the breastplate of judgement the Urim and the Thummim; and they shall be on Aaron's heart, when he goes in before the LORD: and Aaron shall bear the judgement of the children of Israel on his heart before the LORD continually.

---

Verse 30

Thou shalt put in the breastplate - the Urim and the Thummim - What these were has, I believe, never yet been discovered.

1. They are nowhere described.
2. There is no direction given to Moses or any other how to make them.
3. Whatever they were, they do not appear to have been made on this occasion.
4. If they were the work of man at all, they must have been the articles in the ancient tabernacle, matters used by the patriarchs, and not here particularly described, because well known.
5. It is probable that nothing material is designed. This is the opinion of some of the Jewish doctors. Rabbi Menachem on this chapter says, "The Urim and Thummim were not the work of the artificer; neither had the artificers or the congregation of Israel in them any work or any voluntary offering; but they were a mystery delivered to Moses from the mouth of God, or they were the work of God himself, or a measure of the Holy Spirit."
6. That God was often consulted by Urim and Thummim, is sufficiently evident from several scriptures; but how or in what manner he was thus consulted appears in none.
7. This mode of consultation, whatever it was, does not appear to have been in use from the consecration of Solomon's temple to the time of its destruction; and after its destruction it is never once mentioned. Hence the Jews say that the five following things, which were in the first temple, were wanting in the second: "1. The ark with the mercy-seat and cherubim;  
2. The fire which came down from heaven;  
3. The shechinah or Divine presence;  
4. The Holy Spirit, i.e., the gift of prophecy; and  
5. The Urim and Thummim."
8. As the word אורים urim signifies Lights, and the word תמים tummim, Perfections, they were probably designed to point out the light - the abundant information, in spiritual things, afforded by the wonderful revelation which God made of himself by and under the Law; and the perfection - entire holiness and strict conformity to himself, which this dispensation required, and which are introduced and accomplished by that dispensation of light and truth, the Gospel, which was prefigured and pointed out by the law and its sacrifices, etc.; and in this light the subject has been viewed by the Vulgate, where the words are translated doctrina et veritas, doctrine and truth - a system of teaching proceeding from truth itself. The Septuagint translate the original by δηλωσις και αληθεια, the manifestation and the truth; meaning probably the manifestation which God made of himself to Moses and the Israelites, and the truth which he had revealed to them, of which this breastplate should be a continual memorial.

All the other versions express nearly the same things, and all refer to intellectual and spiritual subjects, such as light, truth, manifestation, doctrine, perfection, etc., etc., not one of them supposing that any thing material is intended. The Samaritan text is however different; it adds here a whole clause not found in the Hebrew: *veasitha eth haurim veeth hattummim*, Thou shalt make the Urim and the Thummim. If this reading be admitted, the Urim and Thummim were manufactured on this occasion as well as the other articles. However it be, they are indescribable and unknown.

The manner in which the Jews suppose that the inquiry was made by Urim and Thummim is the following: "When they inquired the priest stood with his face before the ark, and he that inquired stood behind him with his face to the back of the priest; and the inquirer said, Shall I go up? or, Shall I not go up? And forthwith the Holy Ghost came upon the priest, and he beheld the breastplate, and saw therein by the vision of prophecy, Go up, or Go not up, in the letters which showed forth themselves upon the breastplate before his face." See Num 27:18, Num 27:21; Jdg 1:1; Jdg 20:18, Jdg 20:28; 1Sam 23:9-12; 1Sam 28:6; and see Ainsworth.

It was the letters that formed the names of the twelve tribes upon the breastplate, which the Jews suppose were used in a miraculous way to give answers to the inquirers. Thus when David consulted the Lord whether he should go into a city of Judea, three letters which constituted the word *הלע* *aloh*, Go, rose up or became prominent in the names on the breastplate; *ע* *ain*, from the name of Simeon, *ל* *lamed* from the name of Levi, and *ה* *he* from the name of Judah. But this supposition is without proof.

Among the Egyptians, a breastplate something like that of the Jewish high-priest was worn by the president of the courts of justice. Diodorus Siculus has these words: *Εφορει δ' ούτος περι τον τραχηλον εκ χρυσης άλυσεως ηρτημενον ζωδιον των πολυτελων λιθων ο προσηγορευον ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑΝ*. "He bore about his neck a golden chain, at which hung an image set about with or composed of precious stones, which was called Truth." - Bib. Hist., lib. i., chap. 75, p. 225. And he farther adds, "that as soon as the president put this gold chain about his neck, the legal proceedings commenced, but not before. And that when the case of the plaintiff and defendant had been fully and fairly heard, the president turned the image of truth, which was hung to the golden chain round his neck, toward the person whose cause was found to be just," by which he seemed to intimate that truth was on his side.

Aelian, in his *Hist. Var.*, lib. xxxiv., gives the same account. "The chief justice or president," he says, "was always a priest, of a venerable age and acknowledged probity. *Ειχε δε και αγαλμα περι τον αυχενα εκ σαπφειρου λιθου, και εκαλειτο αγαλμα ΑΛΗΘΕΙΑ*. And he had an image which was called Truth engraved on a sapphire, and hung about his neck with a gold chain."

Peter du Val mentions a mummy which he saw at Cairo, in Egypt, round the neck of which was a chain, having a golden plate suspended, which lay on the breast of the person, and on which was engraved the figure of a bird. This person was supposed to have been one of the supreme judges; and in all likelihood the bird, of what kind he does not mention, was the emblem of truth, justice, or innocence.

I have now before me paintings, taken on the spot by a native Chinese, of the different courts in China where criminal causes were tried. In these the judge always appears with a piece of embroidery on his breast, on which a white bird of the *ardea* or heron kind is represented, with expanded wings. All these seem to have been derived from the same source, both among the Hebrews, the Egyptians, and the Chinese. And it is certainly not impossible that the two latter might have borrowed the notion and use of the breastplate of judgment from the Hebrews, as it was in use

among them long before we have any account of its use either among the Egyptians or Chinese. The different mandarins have a breast-piece of this kind.

---

EXODUS 28:31 "You shall make the robe of the ephod all of blue.

---

#### Verse 31

The robe of the ephod - See Clarke on Exo 28:4 (note). From this description, and from what Josephus says, who must have been well acquainted with its form, we find that this meil, or robe, was one long straight piece of blue cloth, with a hole or opening in the center for the head to pass through; which hole or opening was bound about, that it might not be rent in putting it on or taking it off, Exo 28:32.

---

EXODUS 28:32 It shall have a hole for the head in its midst: it shall have a binding of woven work around its hole, as it were the hole of a coat of mail, that it not be torn.

EXODUS 28:33 On its hem you shall make pomegranates of blue, and of purple, and of scarlet, around its hem; and bells of gold between and around them:

EXODUS 28:34 a golden bell and a pomegranate, a golden bell and a pomegranate, around the hem of the robe.

EXODUS 28:35 It shall be on Aaron to minister: and its sound shall be heard when he goes in to the holy place before the LORD, and when he comes out, that he not die.

---

#### Verse 35

His sound shall be heard - The bells were doubtless intended to keep up the people's attention to the very solemn and important office which the priest was then performing, that they might all have their hearts engaged in the work; and at the same time to keep Aaron himself in remembrance that he ministered before Jehovah, and should not come into his presence without due reverence.

That he die not - This seems an allusion to certain ceremonies which still prevail in the eastern countries. Jehovah appeared among his people in the tabernacle as an emperor in his tent among his troops. At the doors of the tents or palaces of grandees was generally placed some sonorous body, either of metal or wood, which was struck to advertise those within that a person prayed for admittance to the presence of the king, etc. As the tabernacle had no door, but a veil, and consequently nothing to prevent any person from going in, Aaron was commanded to put the bells on his robe, that his sound might be heard when he went into the holy place before the Lord.

---

EXODUS 28:36 "You shall make a plate of pure gold, and engrave on it, like the engravings of a signet, 'HOLY TO THE LORD.'

---

#### Verse 36

Thou shalt make a plate of pure gold - The word צִיץ *tsits*, which we render plate, means a flower, or any appearance of this kind, The Septuagint translate it by *πεταλον*, a leaf; hence we might be led to infer that this plate resembled a wreath of flowers or leaves; and as it is called, Exo 29:6, נֶזֶר *nezer*, a crown, and the author of the book of The Wisdom of Solomon 18:24, who was a Jew, and may be supposed to know well what it was, calls it *διαδημα*, it was probably of the form, not of the ancient diadem, but rather of the radiated crown worn by the ancient Roman emperors, which was a gold band that went round the head from the vertex to the occiput; but the position of the Jewish sacerdotal crown was different, as that went round the forehead, under which there was a blue lace or fillet, Exo 28:37, which was probably attached to the mitre or turban, and formed its lowest part or border.

Holiness to the Lord - This we may consider as the grand badge of the sacerdotal office.

1. The priest was to minister in holy things.
2. He was the representative of a holy God.
3. He was to offer sacrifices to make an atonement for and to put away Sin.
4. He was to teach the people the way of righteousness and true holiness.
5. As mediator, he was to obtain for them those Divine influences by which they should be made holy, and be prepared to dwell with holy spirits in the kingdom of glory.
6. In the sacerdotal office he was the type of that holy and just One who, in the fullness of time, was to come and put away sin by the sacrifice of himself.

It is allowed on all hands that this inscription was, in the primitive Hebrew character, such as appears upon ancient shekels, and such as was used before the Babylonish captivity, and probably from the giving of the law on Mount Sinai. The *קֹדֶשׁ לַיהוָה* *Kodesh Laihovah*, of the present Hebrew text, would in those ancient characters appear thus as this illustration, which, in the modern Samaritan character, evidently derived from that illustration. And the Samaritan word in this ancient and original character is the famous Tetragrammaton, or word of four letters, which, to the present day, the Jews will neither write nor pronounce. The Jews teach that these letters were embossed on the gold, and not engraven in it, and that the plate on which they were embossed was about two fingers broad, and that it occupied a space on the forehead between the hair and the eyebrows. But it is most likely that it was attached to the lower part of the mitre.

---

EXODUS 28:37 You shall put it on a lace of blue, and it shall be on the sash; on the front of the sash it shall be.

EXODUS 28:38 It shall be on Aaron's forehead, and Aaron shall bear the iniquity of the holy things, which the children of Israel shall make holy in all their holy gifts; and it shall be always on his forehead, that they may be accepted before the LORD.

---

Verse 38

May bear the iniquity of the holy things - *וְנָשָׂא אֶהְרֵן אֶת עוֹן הַקֹּדָשִׁים* *venasa Aharon eth avon hakkodashim*. And Aaron shall bear (in a vicarious and typical manner) the sin of the holy or separated things - offerings or sacrifices. Aaron was, as the high priest of the Jews, the type or

representative of our blessed Redeemer; and as he offered the sacrifices prescribed by the law to make an atonement for sin, and was thereby represented as bearing their sins because he was bound to make an atonement for them; so Christ is represented as bearing their sins, i.e., the punishment due to the sins of the world, in his becoming a sacrifice for the human race. See Isa 53:4, Isa 53:12, where the same verb, נָסָא nasa, is used; and see 1Pet 2:24. By the inscription on the plate on his forehead Aaron was acknowledged as the holy minister of the holy God. To the people's services and their offerings much imperfection was attached, and therefore Aaron was represented, not only as making an atonement in general for the sins of the people by the sacrifices they brought, but also as making an atonement for the imperfection of the atonement itself, and the manner in which it was brought.

It shall be always upon his forehead - The plate inscribed with Holiness to the Lord should be always on his forehead, to teach that the law required holiness; that this was its aim, design, and end: and the same is required by the Gospel; for under this dispensation it is expressly said, Without holiness no man shall see the Lord; Heb 12:14.

---

EXODUS 28:39 You shall weave the coat in checker work of fine linen, and you shall make a turban of fine linen, and you shall make a sash, the work of the embroiderer.

EXODUS 28:40 "You shall make coats for Aaron's sons, and you shall make sashes for them and you shall make headbands for them, for glory and for beauty.

---

Verse 40

For glory and for beauty - See Clarke's note on Exo 28:2.

---

EXODUS 28:41 You shall put them on Aaron your brother, and on his sons with him, and shall anoint them, and consecrate them, and sanctify them, that they may minister to me in the priest's office.

EXODUS 28:42 You shall make them linen breeches to cover the flesh of their nakedness; from the waist even to the thighs they shall reach:

---

Verse 42

Linen breeches - This command had in view the necessity of purity and decency in every part of the Divine worship, in opposition to the shocking indecency of the pagan worship in general, in which the priests often ministered naked, as in the sacrifices to Bacchus, etc.

On the garments of the high priest some general reflections have already been made; see Exo 28:2 (note): and to what is there said it may be just necessary to add, that there can be no doubt of their being all emblematical of spiritual things; but of which, and in what way, no man can positively say. Many commentators have entered largely into this subject, and have made many edifying and useful remarks; but where no clue is given to guide us through a labyrinth in which the possibility of mistake is every moment occurring, it is much better not to attempt to be wise above what is written; for however edifying the reflections may be which are made on these subjects, yet, as they are not clearly deducible from the text itself, they can give little satisfaction to a sincere inquirer

after truth. These garments were all made for glory and for beauty, and this is the general account that it has pleased God to give of their nature and design: in a general sense, they represented,

1. The necessity of purity in every part of the Divine worship;
2. The necessity of an atonement for sin;
3. The purity and justice of the Divine Majesty; and,
4. The absolute necessity of that holiness without which none can see the Lord. And these subjects should be diligently kept in view by all those who wish to profit by the curious and interesting details given in this chapter. In the notes these topics are frequently introduced.

---

EXODUS 28:43 They shall be on Aaron, and on his sons, when they go in to the Tent of Meeting, or when they come near to the altar to minister in the holy place; that they don't bear iniquity, and die: it shall be a statute forever to him and to his descendants after him.

---