



For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass: For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth therein, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man shall be blessed in his deed. (James 1:23-25)

Those who take some pride in their appearance may check themselves in the mirror every moment before going out to the public. This is not vanity, but appropriate for those who respect the opinion of others and wish to put their best foot forward. I remember we had a mirror at the top of each stairwell at the US Military Academy for the cadets to check their appearance in detail prior to going to morning formation. Appearances are important. Sloppy and unkempt dress demonstrates a lack of respect for others. General Patton always insisted that his soldiers maintain proper dress and professional bearing under all circumstances. He believed that self-esteem and professionalism were thereby enhanced. "If a soldier dresses like a soldier, he will be more apt to ACT like a soldier" was his policy. The same is true of Christians, is it not?

The reference James makes to the mirror (glass) is to the Gospel of the Lord Jesus Christ. Paul also alludes to the mirror: *Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. But we all, with open face beholding as in a glass the glory of the Lord, are changed into the same image from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord.* (2 Cor 3:17-18) Of course, merely looking at our reflected image in the glass does not change us; but looking into the glass and seeing Christ in our image will be a great blessing. His Word is a mirror into which we look to see our true selves. We see that we are not that much better than Adam, than the adulterous David, than Cain, or Barabbas, or the Woman at the Well or the one taken in adultery – we are all prone to sin and have given in to the urge. By looking into the mirror of the Lord we see two amazing things – our amazing lack of righteousness, and His amazing totality of righteousness. If we behold

His Person long enough and with great devotion (by studying His Word), we may become more of His likeness and nature.

Admittedly, there are different kinds of glasses other than mirrors. There are reading glasses that make the print of God's Word larger in our vision. We should always magnify the Word of the Lord in our hearts and minds. The close proximity of that Word reminds us of the God who is near. On the other hand, we have telescopes and binoculars that bring images far away much nearer to our sight. Though the sinner may be far away from God, the Word can be brought nearer by hearing, preaching, and seeing. By looking into the Glass of God's Word, events far away may become more real and present. In reading the prophecies of Revelations, we see things that seem far into the future, but the Glass brings them as close as our hearts.

If the Mirror is true (and not warped by the heat of the world) we get a clear picture of ourselves when we look into it. If we have the pure and undefiled Word of God to look into, we behold a true and glorious picture of the blessed Savior who died for us. If we feed on Him in our hearts, our souls being fed by His likeness will become more like Him. After all, if we bear the family name of Christ – Christian – should we not bear strong resemblance of that blessed Family He represents? Taking upon ourselves the likeness of Christ, we find joy that the world cannot offer.

When a man or woman looks into a mirror, they look for things that are out of place, or even missing. Parts of the attire that are amiss are straightened, and those things that are missing are affixed. After that close examination and correction, we are then ready to go out into our society or business. When we look into the Mirror of God's Word, we find many things amiss, missing, or needing improvement. We are told very clearly in that Word of God those things that are needful for us to appear as true Christians in dress and character.

Many are simply enchanted at their own appearance in the world's mirrors. But how much greater enchantment is found in the Mirror of God's Word! Do we take greater delight in the way the world sees us, or the way God sees us – and we see Him? *But his delight is in the law of the LORD; and in his law doth he meditate day and night.* (Psalms 1:2) Do you delight in the vision you see in God's Word, or that of the world?

In order to get a true image of one's face when looking into the mirror; one must look squarely into the mirror (with open face). To look askance will not work. The same is true of God's Word. We must look squarely into it without any worldly impediments to change the angle with which we view it. And there is another consideration that must be always present when looking into the mirror – light. When we look into the Mirror of God's Word, we must depend upon the Holy Ghost to Lighten the Word in our hearts and minds. Looking into a book in the dark never profits.

When we look into the mirrors of the world, we see blemishes and spots that mar our appearance, but once we depart, we remember our faces in a more perfect way and forget the splotches that mark our features. The same is true of the Mirror of God's Word. If we only glimpse, infrequently, into it, we will forget the depravity of our own souls reflected there, and the glorious righteousness of Christ which is ever present there. If we ever forget our own wretchedness compared to His immaculate Figure and Face, we are doomed at that moment. We must remember the image we saw, and work to improve the deficiencies of the image of ourselves; and emulate the image of Christ in our lives.

The mirror looks both forward and back. We look forward to see ourselves, and the image is reflected BACK to our eyes. The same is true of God's Word both in Scripture and in prayer. We look to find that image of God in His Glass, and that image looks back to us as we both read and pray. How wonderful, is it not?

Looking into those mirrors of the world, we often take great pride in how wonderful we appear in our fine dress; but when we look into the Mirror of God's Word, unlike the mirrors of the world, we go away humbled and without pride. We see how woefully short we fall of the righteousness of Christ: *For all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (Romans 3:23) We cannot help but see our hopelessness and unworthiness; but we cannot, either, help but see the glorious solution to our predicament there: *Being justified freely by his grace through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus: Whom God hath set forth to be a propitiation through faith in his blood, to declare his righteousness for the remission of sins that are past, through the forbearance of God; To declare, I say, at this time his righteousness: that he might be just, and the justifier of him which believeth in Jesus. Where is boasting then? It is excluded. By what law? of works? Nay: but by the law of faith. Therefore we conclude that a man is justified by faith without the deeds of the law.* (Romans 3:24-28)

Next time you look into the mirror, look below the superficial to see what kind of man you really are. To find out for certain, look into the Mirror of God's Word – not just occasionally, but every morning after you awaken, and every night before retiring, and every opportunity in between.

Have you looked in the Mirror lately, friend?