



**B**UT be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves. <sup>23</sup> 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: <sup>24</sup> For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. <sup>25</sup> 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 1:22-25)

It seems to me many important aspects of the Mirror and Looking Glass of our last devotion need further elucidation and fathoming. We discussed the evil step-mother Queen who looked into the wonderful Mirror (God's Word) which was incapable of lying, but could not bear the truth revealed therein. Instead, she attempted to alter the truth rather than adjust her disposition to that truth revealed. How many today are doing the same thing? If they despise the image that looks back at them from the Mirror, instead of considering how to improve the image, they seek to alter the Mirror of Truth. This is happening with unchecked license with our Bible versions today and the weak and sterile Gospel being preached from our pulpits.

There is no sin known to man that is not reflected and exposed in the Mirror of God – His Holy Word. When we read with understanding and faith, we can see our sordid souls in the adulterer and murderer, King David; the lying deceit of Abraham; the murderous treachery of Cain; the tepid courage and failure of St. Peter; or the damning treason of Judas. We may not like what we see of our soul when we look deeply into God's Word. If we see our own mortal and sinful souls with twisted countenance, we may be discouraged; but right beside, if we look keenly into the Word, we will see an altogether different image that reflects a soul who has been saved by the grace and mercy of God. That image will be that of the Lord Jesus Christ. We must be like Him if we are going to be His.

How can we see the images of the Looking Glass, or Mirror, in sharpest contrast?

To begin with, we need Light in order for the Mirror of God to be useful to our understanding. A Mirror is useless without Light. So having a personal relationship with Jesus Christ and fully informed of His Gospel, we have the benefit of the Light of the World. And in order to comprehend what that Word MEANS to us and our own particular circumstances, we need a Counsellor to open our understanding. That Counsellor is the Holy Ghost whose principle mission is to open eyes to truth by bringing to our remembrance ALL things contained in the Gospel concerning our Lord Jesus Christ: *26 But the Comforter, which is the Holy Ghost, whom the Father will send in my name, he shall teach you all things, and bring all things to your remembrance, whatsoever I have said unto you.* (John 14:26) You should know, friends, the Holy Ghost cannot remind you of any Word which you have not even bothered to read.

Can a man see God? Well, not literally in image, but he certainly can in faith and truth. When we look into the Looking Glass and can see the image of our Lord Jesus Christ, we have seen God the Father, because our Lord is the express image of the Father. Jesus Christ is the blueprint of God for every person's original design, but that design has been marred and ruined by sin, beginning with Adam and continuing to our own transgressions.

Remember the Mirror that could not lie in the story of Snow White? That is just like God's Word. It cannot lie! Our Bible is a perfect Mirror in every respect. We not only see EXACTLY what kind of person we are, but also what God can do to redeem and sanctify our souls.

The Bronze Mirror at the base of the Laver in the Tabernacle was of polished bronze. Its purpose was to give the worshipper a sharp image of his human mortality before going before God in worship. This same principle is followed by example in the Book of Common Prayer for Holy Communion. The opening Collect to Holy Communion reveals our exposed souls and appeals to God that our worship be reverent and Holy.

The polished bronze mirror was used to alert the watchman on the wall of approaching danger to the city. So the Mirror of God warns and defends against the constant assaults of false doctrine and enemy subterfuge. There is an ancient legend in Greek history that Archimedes used concave mirrors to concentrate sunbeams of light on the wooden hulls of Roman invading ships to set fire to them. (much like a magnifying glass).

When the believer looks into the Mirror of God's Word, the Word of God and its precise image is revealed to Him. That Mirror of God, like the one of Snow White, cannot lie!

The image reflected in a Mirror, or Looking Glass, is precise and sure. So is the sinfulness of man reflected in God's Word and that Perfect Law of Liberty reflected in the image of Christ there.

A certain kind of Looking Glass (magnifying glass) enlarges the Word of God and magnifies His image to our weakened sight. Other may cause our vision of Christ to be seen in greater relief from great distances when we have wandered far away from Him. (telescope). When we look to God through the telescope of His Word, we see Him magnified to our soul's eye and brought much nearer. But if we ourselves are viewed from the opposite end of the telescope, we appear, appropriately, much smaller and further away.

Looking into the Mirror, our express natural image, warts and all, are clearly revealed to us. But beside we may view that perfect image of Christ that contrast so

massively from our own. We see what sin is like in our own image, and what righteousness is like in Christ Jesus. We see what our character was like before grace in the deformity caused by sin and error; and we also see what light of beauty and holiness of our Lord is reflected in our redeemed souls following that redemption.

A mirror is used to confirm our proper dress and appearance. The Mirror of God may be used to look into our souls and see what is amiss according to God's Word. We learn how we should appear in reverence before God and to dress our souls, and our bodies, in modesty and humility.

If a man or woman wants to view, with accuracy, their complete appearance, they must face the mirror squarely. We cannot view our image askance, but full faced. The same is true of God's Word. We cannot presume that sin is acceptable simply because where sin abounds, so grace abounds much more.

There are numerous parallels and examples in Scripture of the Mirror principle. One is reflective of the sower who went forth to sow. There were four kinds of soil, but the same word (Gospel). One of the soils demonstrate a shallowness of understanding that cannot endure the temptations of the world: *22 He also that received seed among the thorns is he that heareth the word; and the care of this world, and the deceitfulness of riches, choke the word, and he becometh unfruitful.* (Matt 13:22) This is the same principle of two different men looking into the Mirror of God: *23 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: 24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was. 25 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)

The natural mirror of glass cannot amend our characters, but the Mirror of God's Word can certainly do so. As one crosses the Seine River in Paris to the Louvre, he is confronted with the most spectacular and beautiful examples of the architectural genius of humankind. Proceeding into and across the central square, the thoroughfare turns right down a street bordering the Seine. There may be seen many aspiring artists and their works of art. Many behold the great masterpieces of art deposited in the Louvre so intently that they seem motionless for long periods of time. They then may make a single stroke on their canvas in imitation of the Master Artist. That is what God's Word is to us. We intently study the image of God reflected in His Word and Mirror and are gradually changed into the Masterpiece which He intensioned in our making. *17 Now the Lord is that Spirit: and where the Spirit of the Lord is, there is liberty. 18 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)

Who are you, friend? If you wish to truly know yourself, look into God's Mirror. Then you may observe how your sin-oppressed image is morphed in that greater image of the Lord Jesus Christ whose visage you behold therein. By studying the great Master, we become more and more like Him, and are sanctified to Holy service.