

THE BEREAN

"...EXAMINING THE SCRIPTURES DAILY..." (Acts 17:11)

OUR REFLECTION

*A STUDY OF THE EPISTLE OF JAMES
PART SEVENTEEN OF SIXTY FOUR*

How many times a day do we look at ourselves in a mirror? A passing glance or a prolonged study will reveal something of our physical appearance. But the mirror cannot reveal the inward man. It can show whether our dress is fashionable, but is helpless to show our character of heart. We see how we look to others, but not how we appear to God. The word of God has the power to reveal us as we really are. "For if any one is a hearer of the word and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a mirror: for he beholdeth himself, and goeth away, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was" (James 1:23,24). If the man who does not obey the word "straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was", the hearing of the word must reveal to him his real self. Perhaps herein lies the reason many avoid Bible teaching. They do not want to see themselves as they are in contrast with what God wants them to be.

The Bible contains the stories of many men and women who picture in their actions the same characteristics of people today. How many can see in the jealousy of Haman the evil of their own heart? The desire for praise which led Ananias and Sapphira to lie to the

Holy Spirit is hidden in hearts today, and the Word makes it evident to the guilty. As we contemplate Demas forsaking Paul and Christ for the love of the world, must we not admit that he is just picturing us? Have we not felt the same cowardly fear that caused Peter to deny Christ?

The mirror is relentless. It does not flatter. Wishing does not change its reflection. Avoiding it does not change the reality. Going away to forget what was seen makes no corrections. What is the picture we see as we look into God's word? Can we see growing within us the faith of Paul, the patience of Job, the confidence of Caleb, the courage of Daniel, the purity of Joseph, the sacrifice of Stephen? Look into the mirror of God's word and rearrange every part of your life that is shown to be out of place. Do not go away to forget what manner of man you are or the manner of man you can be by God's grace.

(B. G. Echols)

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