

## A REFLECTOR OF GOD

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." Isaiah 66:13.

Our knowledge of eternal realities is in the nature of reflections. This does not mean, however, that they are any the less substantial or real. There cannot be a reflection unless there is something to reflect. If there is no image before the mirror, there is nothing for it to reproduce. In eternity we shall see face to face and know as we are also known, but for the present we "see through a glass darkly." In view of this it is remarkable how much we may know in our present state of being. The reflectors are many and varied; the avenues of knowledge are diverse and wonderful.

"The heavens declare the glory of God; and the firmament showeth his handiwork" (Psalm 19:1).

God's Word is a mirror. What a revelation!

The incarnation of the Son of God affords an incomparable disclosure of the heart of God. "The Word was made flesh, and dwelt among us, (and we beheld his glory, the glory as of the only begotten of the Father,) full of grace and truth" (John 1:14).

Human relationships are also reflectors. This is the thought of the verse, "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." God uses the know to reveal the unknown.

The fact of motherhood is used by the Spirit of God as a reflector in which we may see Him Who is immortal and eternal. The text contains the words of God to and through His prophet.

We are familiar with God's use of fatherhood to illustrate His relationship to His children. "Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him." Our Lord said, "If ye then, being evil, know how to give good gifts unto your children, how much more shall your heavenly Father give good things to them that ask him?" God has a father's concern and interest in those who trust Him.

The idea of God's care and comfort being like a mother's is not so familiar. In God the qualities of motherhood are lifted to infinitude and perfection. As far as I know, this is the only place in the Bible where God is compared to a mother.

A mother's influence never ends, but follows us from our cradles to our graves. This all men know. That is why the name "mother" is fragrant with sweet and tender memories — it is embalmed in the heart's undying affections. All men think of their mother as their best earthly friend. It is a sad day in our experience when the news comes that mother has died, or when the lid is closed for the last time on her casket. The loss is irreparable. We thank God for Christian mothers. We all know that a mother's place cannot be filled by any other human being. No honest human being will ever promise to comfort us as we have been comforted by our mothers.

One of the outstanding qualities of motherhood is the ability to comfort. So many troubles, ills and tears of childhood are assuaged by mother's power to console. A child naturally goes to his mother for sympathy and comfort. Even a mother's peculiar power to comfort is traceable to the loving heart of God. When our Lord was about to leave His disciples He said, "I will not leave you comfortless." (John 14:18). Then He proceeded to tell them that another Comforter, even the Holy Spirit, was coming to abide with them forever, God has very definitely provided for our comfort. Our responsibility

is to live where we may receive and enjoy it.

"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." God's comfort is as real and efficacious as that of a mother. So, let us consider then how a mother performs this ministry.

### I. By Her Presence.

It is a very common sight to see a child in tears sobbing out his grief on his mother's breast. Just to be near this source of comfort satisfies the child. Have you ever seen a child lost in the crowd and crying because he could not find his mother? Strangers tried to pacify him, but their efforts were in vain. When the mother finally appeared the world of fear was brightened by her presence. How comfortless are human hearts when they are separated from God by their sins! How impossible for them to realize the comfort He longs to impart! Spiritual distance makes divine comfort impossible. Being out of fellowship with the great Comforter robs us of heavenly consolation. How sad to witness people around us in need of this comfort living in such a way that it can never reach them! To the person who is not a child of God God's comfort is non-existent.

As a mother comforts by her presence, so does God. The sweet singer of Israel wrote, "Yea, though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me." God assured His servant by saying, "My presence shall go with thee." Listen to God speaking to Israel through Isaiah: "Fear thou not, for I am with thee; be not dismayed, for I am thy God; I will strengthen thee; yea, I will help thee; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness" (Isaiah 41:10). God said, "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with thee; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee: when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned, neither shall the flame kindle upon thee." The child of God can rest and rejoice in the presence of Him Who comforteth as a mother.

### II. By Her Words.

No words are as comforting to a child as those of his mother. The very sound of her voice dispels distress and fear, and at the same time induces repose. In His Word He has placed a message that will fit into every situation and meet the need of the hour. In all of their difficulties and troubles, Christ dwells in the hearts of Christians, comforts them with His gracious promises, lifting them above the cares, troubles and vexations of the world, inspiring in their hearts peace, love and joy.

There are three different kinds of experience common to men in this life which seem to require the presence and comforting words of our mothers, namely, when troubles come, when we are sick and when death is approaching. In each of these God has promised to be near us.

Sometime or other every one of us will be reaching out for this thing called comfort. Life is characterized by change, and ours is a world of uncertainty and trouble. Life must have its exit as well as its entrance. The happiest years will fade away, the sweetest relationships will be broken, we will slip down into the valley of the shadow and the world will sink beneath our feet. What then? Find comfort in the promises of God.

### III. By Her Actions.

A mother comforts by her actions in many and varied ways. She is keenly aware of the most effective means of taking the attention of the child from its troubles. She may pick up some shining toy to turn the tearful eyes away from the troublesome

circumstances, or she may take a cookie from the jar and offer it to the child, or she may remove the child from the scene of trouble to new surroundings where its heartaches are soon forgotten. God is far more versatile than any mother in knowing how to comfort His own.

Sometimes God sends some human being as a comforter. Paul told us in II Corinthians 7:5-6 that when he went to Macedonia he was afflicted on every side; without were fightings and within were fears. Right in the midst of all this Titus appeared. His coming was like a fresh breeze on a sultry day; like oil on troubled waters. Paul said, "God comforted us by the coming of Titus." How often in an hour of need some understanding friend or spiritual helper comes with words that strengthen and stabilize our hearts -- a messenger sent by the Lord!

God's comfort may come through a letter from an "old" friend, breathing the warm spirit of faithful solicitation on our behalf, or it may be some unexpected deed of kindness that serves to lift us out of the valley of discouragement or despondency. God has an infinite variety of ways to comfort us, and frequently they are so unobtrusive that we miss the divine love behind the earthly deed.

God sometimes comforts us by turning our gaze outward to others and putting it into our hearts to minister to their needs. We, who have been comforted of God, in ministering comfort to others find our own hearts strangely warmed and blessed.

Years ago two travelers in the Alps were overtaken by a blizzard. As the storm raged and the falling snow made the going difficult, the cold also became more intense, and one of the travelers was becoming numb and about to give up the fight when, just on the verge of yielding to his feelings, he stumbled over something solid, and stooping down, brushing aside the snow, he discovered another traveler who had been overcome with the cold. For a moment he forgot his own peril and stopped to resuscitate the unconscious stranger. Finally his efforts were successful, and as consciousness was returning to this perishing man his deliverer discovered that in the process he had kept himself from freezing.

It is quite true that we cannot comfort and help others without ministering to ourselves. As he often been remarked, "There is always someone worse off than we," and in trying to share their burden we lighten our own.

Like a mother, God has many ways of bolstering our faltering steps with His loving care and satisfying comfort.

Being "in the way" is the secret of receiving the Lord's comfort. Many are missing it because they are not in the way. Being out of the Lord's will and out of fellowship with Him, it is impossible to receive and to enjoy the comfort which He longs to give. Our chief concern should be to be in the place where the Lord can communicate His sure, immediate and sufficient comfort to us. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." The true mother knows in what way to comfort, whether in silence, or by speech, or by action. God, Who knows our hearts better than any loving mother, will adapt His comfort to our natures and our necessities.