

“The Lord is long-suffering to us-ward not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance” 2 Pet. iii. 9.

“LOOK AT THAT SPOT!”



WHILE visiting an art exhibition I stood before an exquisitely executed marble statue. I admired its beautiful proportions. I thought of the months, perhaps years, of patient toil required to extract that “thing of beauty” from a rough, shapeless mass of marble, and in my thoughts I was paying tribute to the genius which had produced it, when my reverie was broken in upon by these words, “It certainly is very fine; *but* what a pity! Look at that spot on the hair!” I turned round, and saw a person pointing towards the statue. I again turned to look at the statue, and, true enough, there was a spot, but really such a small one that it might easily have been overlooked, and in such an unimportant part of the statue that it could hardly be deemed a serious defect. But somehow, whenever I looked at that statue, my eye rested on that little spot, and unconsciously I found myself seeking for others; and although I failed in my search, I could not help echoing the words, “What a pity that spot is there.”

Dear reader, have you never passed through an experience analogous to this? You have been admiring the earnest zeal, faithfulness and eloquence of your minister, when some person has broken in with the words, Yes, he is earnest—faithful—eloquent, but—ah! that miserable **BUT**; it is usually the prelude to fault-finding—“he dresses so peculiarly; he reads so carelessly; he—well, we shall not enumerate the many channels into which the remark diverges at that forked **BUT**. And after all, the whole matter generally resolves itself into a “spot on the hair” not worth speaking about, and would

have remained unnoticed by others, if the carper had held his peace.

Sometimes while passing along the street we hear a little boy say, in a half crying tone, “Well just you let him do it to you and see how you like it” Now we say the same to those fault finders. Put yourself in the Ministers place, and see how you would like it. Why you feel annoyed when like a faithful watchman he preaches against Tobacco, Moderate Drinking, Dancing, Opera going Card playing, extravagance in dress, and you say “What business had he to point to that *little spot*, on my otherwise *pure* character. He might have passed that over.” Dear Brother you don’t like it, and yet he is performing a duty in so doing.

God’s command is “Thou shalt not steal.” Don’t be a thief. Don’t rob your minister of his influence or his reputation. Don’t rob your neighbor of the pleasure he now takes in listening to his ministrations. Don’t point to unimportant or imaginary spots. If you do, you need not wonder that success does not attend his work. That he is not so beloved by your children or by others. How can they enjoy his ministrations? Why *you* have set them to work “*looking for spots*.” Don’t help the World, or the Devil, they can do enough mischief without your help. At a recent installation service in Missouri the preacher said, “The world can see a fly on the church, and a fly speck on a minister from quite a long distance. Men can see these things who have not paid, for years their pew rent, their meat bill, or for their newspapers. One of our American humorists has said, “A healthy hornet, if feeling well, can disperse a camp meeting.” So one tongue can keep a parish constantly in trouble. Some tongues seem constantly engaged in a sword dance; and the poor minister falls on the points of the same, and his usefulness is sadly curtailed. Brethren don’t let these spots appear in your feasts of charity. Remember Our Master’s words “Why beholdest thou the mote that is in thy brothers eye, but considerest not the beam that is in thine own eye.”

LOVE is the fulfilling of the law.