

If a man be overtaken in a fault . . . restore such an one.—Gal. vi. 1.

(ORIGINAL.)

"Look at that Spot!"



HILE 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 *miscellaneous* 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 which 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 these fault-finders. Put yourself in the Minister's 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 neighbour 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.

"Fig-leaves."

HOW long have you known the Lord?" "About three weeks, sir; *but I have been for forty years sewing fig-leaves together.*" There is a good deal expressed in these few words. Thousands are employed in the same profitless work as our poor friend. Yes; thousands are occupied in the useless business of sewing fig-leaves together. The man who is seeking to save his soul by means of rites and ceremonies, ordinances and sacraments, church-going and morality, is just sewing fig-leaves together.

All these things may be, and many of them really are, very good in their right place. But as a ground for the soul to rest upon for pardon and peace—as a title wherewith to draw nigh to a holy and righteous God—as a foundation on which to build for Eternity, they are in very truth, but sewing fig-leaves together; and all who trust to them will find them to be so, when, alas! it will be too late.



"Not of Works."

MAN is rowing a boat on a river just above a dreadful cataract; the current begins to bear him downward; the spectators give him up for lost. "He is gone!" they exclaim; but in another moment a rope is thrown toward the wretched man; it strikes the water near the boat. *Now* how does the case stand? Do all the spectators call upon him to *row*? to *try harder* to reach the shore, when with every stroke of his arm the boat is evidently nearing the falls? O no! Give up your desperate attempt! *take hold of the rope!* But he chooses to row, and in a few moments he disappears and perishes. All his hope lay, not in rowing, but in laying hold of the rope; for while he was rowing he could not grasp the rope. So the sinner's hope lies, not in struggling to save himself, but in *ceasing* to struggle; for while he expects to accomplish the work of salvation himself, he will not look to Christ who did it for him.