

received by the people, some of which come very near the golden mean, others degenerate into dead indifference, and others again are erratic and unstable—sometimes cold and sometimes hot. These are the phenomena which an acute observer may find in almost every Church. This, however, is worthy of note, namely; that where there is much genuine piety and spiritual appreciation of divine things, there is little censorious criticism. It is the noisy and vain professor who is the pest of the minister and the Church, and who seldom finds any bread good enough for him or her to eat.

We do not exonerate ministers from all blame in the form or matter of their ministrations. They have many imperfections which detract from the acceptableness of their services, and hinder, it may be, the progress of religion. They have no claim to immunity from just criticism and censure. They stand before the general public as professed leaders and instructors, and it is right the public should "try the spirits whether they be of God," and "prove all things," that they may "hold fast that which is good." Ministers, therefore, considering the momentous issues which depend upon the right and faithful discharge of their functions, ought to have a special regard to their public reputation. They should not despise the opinion even of those who are without. While on the one hand they should avoid that truculent and flattering style of speech and behaviour which is the characteristic of some men; on the other, they should equally beware of that haughty, distant and peremptory manner, which repels the young and sensitive, and crushes the spiritual affections of the sincerely pious. To become all things to all men is the Gospel rule, which if practised, after the example of the great Apost'e, would enable ministers in every circle of life to act and speak with dignity and grace.

Ministers err as frequently as people in their estimation of what ministerial success consists in. They, doubtless, all profess at their ordination to have the glory of God as their chief end and great inducement to enter upon the ministry. In most cases this profession is sincerely and conscientiously made. But there are mixed motives in every man's mind for the course of life which he pursues. There may be great and chief motives which are never out of sight, and which occupy the supreme place; but along with these there are generally other and inferior motives, which may greatly modify the influence of the superior. We cannot doubt but this is frequently the case with ministers. It appears to many of them a fine thing to be popular—to be spoken of in the sweet tones of admiration—to have large and listening audiences hanging upon their lips. These are temptations, especially to the most gifted and choice of the Lord's servants. They are the "kingdoms of the world and the glory of them," which the tempter displays to lead them away from allegiance to the meek and lowly ONE. To be popular and to gather large congregations are not necessarily wrong aims. The truth is, that without these to some extent, a minister cannot in these days get on at all, and there is no reason why it should be otherwise. The ability to interest is the ability to instruct. However learned and profound a man may be, what will these gifts avail for the edification of a people if he cannot speak intelligibly, or convey his knowledge to others in an acceptable way? To be useful a man must be popular; he must be able to interest, as well as to instruct the people who wait upon his ministry. Let no young preacher or student think that he can or ought to be successful without popular gifts. In public estimation, a good thought will not atone for a bad sentence, or a disagreeable delivery. After all that one may say about the caprice of the popular judgment, it is not, upon the whole, unreasonable. There is a disposition in congregations to be pleased with those who try to please, and to commend and love those who earnestly seek their spiritual welfare. Whenever, therefore, we hear ministers, especially young ministers, railing about the