

Our Contributors.

Slippery Places for Clerical Feet.

Every department of human activity has its slippery places. The slippery places in clerical life may not be the same as those found in other directions, but they are there, and some of them are so slippery that getting over them uninjured is not easy.

The minister who depends much on his newness stands on a very slippery place. With an effusive, shallow kind of a congregation a new minister may accomplish more for a time than can be accomplished by one they know, but if the new man has any sense he will not depend much on the popularity of mere newness. If he has sense enough to be a minister of the gospel he must know that one cannot be new more than a twelvemonth. He should know that if people admire you just because and only because you are new, their admiration must cease as soon as the newness wears off. It generally does, and then the effusive admirers go in search of another new man. Hence it is that a minister, popular merely because he is new, stands on a very slippery place.

A minister called, admired, extravagantly praised, and almost worshipped, solely because he is young, stands on the most slippery of all places. He cannot remain young, and the people who blow about him only because he is young must gratify their taste by worshipping some other young man as soon as the present idol ages a little. Some ministers age very soon in this country. And then, too, the place is slippery because the admiration is founded mainly on the imagination, so far as it is founded on anything. The people imagine that the young man will grow and develop into something extraordinary. Extraordinary men in any line may be counted on the fingers of one hand. The young man called, admired, puffed and lionized, solely because he is young, stands on a very slippery place.

A minister constantly puffed by the newspapers is on a very slippery place. Some ministers, either by their own efforts or by the efforts of their so-called friends, or by both combined, manage to keep their names before the public all the time. The public get tired of looking at the same names and demand something new. The editors were tired long ago and are only too glad to puff a new man. The cleric who depended on puffs finds the ice is not only slippery, but thin, and unless he is a very clever skater he goes under.

The minister who depends on waves of public feeling is on a very treacherous place. Every now and then a wave of some kind passes over all communities. There is always a lot of clergymen ready to mount any wave that rolls along. When they get on the crest they shout in the most vociferous style. If they have a grudge against any man, especially any other minister, they always try to roll the wave over him. We know the tribe. We have watched

them more than once. By and by the waves subside. The shouters have to come back to their level and their level is not a high one. Now that there is no wave to ride on and shout from they look smaller than ever.

The minister who poses as a leader in any kind of a fight is on a slippery place. The opposition of those he fights against is the least dangerous element in the dangerous business. Your friends for whom you fight will blame you because you don't fight hard enough, because you don't fight with their weapons, because you don't do everything they advise, and then crucify you in the end if they don't win. If they do win, in a little while they and their opponents will get tired of the alienation and make peace over your ecclesiastical corpse.

A minister who professes to be more orthodox than he really is stands on a slippery place. Still more slippery is the spot on which a minister stands who really knows little about the higher or any other kind of criticism, but deals in second hand rationalism for advertising purposes.

Perhaps the greatest danger of all lies in an entirely different direction. In this age and country suavity helps a minister quite as much as strength. In some congregations smiling debility is the chief element of ministerial success. Such being the case the temptation to profess a greater interest in and love for some people than one sometimes feels must always be strong, and it is as subtle as it is strong.

The fact is, popularity that comes from anything but a faithful and prolonged discharge of duty is always more or less dangerous. Popularity, for the time being, may easily be acquired in a way not specially creditable to the man who gets it.—*Knoxonian, in The Presbyterian.*

ABOUT LIBRARIES.

Pres. Harper says: "It is a question whether a man has any business to enter the ministry with less than five hundred volumes" in his library. The preacher should be intellectually equipped, but even a blind man can see the fallacy in Dr. Harper's statement. The world's greatest preachers have not drawn their inspiration nor their qualifications from books. The really great preachers today who may have ten times five hundred books in their libraries would doubtless say that the One Book meant more than all the others to them in preaching the gospel. Let us encourage the possession and use of good books, but let us remember that if a preacher's ideas and inspiration come chiefly from printed pages, it may be a question whether he also "has any business to enter the ministry." "First there are books," says the *Christian Register*, "then there are books about these books and their writers, and then other books about them, and so on, until the world is filled with books about

books. Meanwhile a dozen shelves will hold the books that contain the essential things in all literature, ancient and modern, including science and philosophy."

THE PREACHING VOICE.

The Lindsay *Watchman*, in a recent article, has some forcible remarks on preaching, from which we extract the following: "Many men do not speak nearly as well in the pulpit as they do out of it. At the dinner table they read a war despatch from the morning paper with a great deal of naturalness and strength, but the moment they tackle a hymn or piece of Scripture in the pulpit all sorts of eccentricities swarm upon their tongues. Their conversation in the drawing-room is pleasant enough to hear; at the after-dinner speech they have something of the naturalness and directness of the business men around them, but once the text is given out on Sunday morning the pulpit mannerisms come back, the drawl, the intermittent rant, the unaccountable gesticulation all return, and the pew is on the rack. The skilful speaking voice! What power is in it! How it rouses up the intellect, scourges the emotions, and thrills the moral nature to the point of pain! It has wrought miracles with the multitude and made captives of the crowd. The pulpit should be its throne."

HELEN KELLER'S EXAMINATION.

How Helen Keller, the deaf and blind American girl, passed the examination for entrance to the coeducational annex of Harvard University in face of extraordinary difficulties is told in the February *Munsey*. Miss Keller asked for no relaxation of the ordinary rules, merely having the papers copied in Braille characters. At the last moment it was found that the gentleman who had copied them used the American style of Braille, which is slightly different from the English, which Miss Keller used. However, there was nothing to do but to go ahead with the examination, leaving her to puzzle out the unfamiliar method of writing. . . . To add to the deaf-blind girl's difficulties the specially made watch upon which she relies for her knowledge of the time had been left behind, and she had to work without being able to know how many hours or minutes remained to her as she went from question to question—a serious disadvantage, as every student knows. But she passed the examination credibly, not to say triumphantly. Her answers were satisfactory in every subject she took up; in Latin she earned a high mark, and in Greek a very high one.

—The American Board of Foreign Missions in their first decade raised \$16,000. That was eighty years ago. In the last decade they raised \$701,000.

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