

## HAVE PATIENCE WITH THE YOUNG MEN.

Destructive criticism is in the air to-day, and the classrooms of our theological hall are thick with it. The professor must deal with it and the student eagerly seizes upon it. To him it is as dainty a bit as is the latest gossip to the habitue of the five o'clock tea table. The corridors and the rooms of the students hear very much more of destructive criticism than is to be heard in the lecture-rooms. Students are nothing if not radical, and the most advanced theories of German rationalists become commonplace after a few heated discussions.

As a rule this wears off after the first year of theological study, and visions fade as knowledge increases. The student who would pronounce without hesitation upon a certain theory in his first year is not so sure of it in his second, and labels it and puts it by in his third. So when we hear of a young man airing radical views we label him "freshman", and wait till he learns more. Sometimes he has passed through college, and may be in charge, but he is still a freshman in development and one need not despair of him even yet. A little experience of the actual work of caring for souls will work wonders in him.

We have been led to make these remarks because of the somewhat drastic treatment given to one or two students by stern elders this summer. A young man, very young in years and much younger in judgment, was to take charge of a certain important field for the summer months. He came directly from the college corridors, and from the heated debates carried on there. He had probably taken part in them for the first time that year. In his opening sermon he could not get away from them, and wove a little destructive criticism into an evangelical sermon. The elders waited on him early the following week, and brought the treasurer with them. They did not remonstrate with him, they spoke directly to the point. They bade the treasurer pay him for the one day's service then assured him that his services were no longer needed.

Now that was drastic. A little patience with that young man would have saved looking for another supply during the summer months. He would have come all right. But that treatment is more rational than was meted out in another case. The student came from another college, and was preaching for one of our pastors. He also introduced some instruction upon the work of Elijah and some reflections upon the common ignorance regarding the time of his writings and so on. One Scotchman looked at him steadily for a time, then did some thinking for the rest of the hour. He visited the city in which this young man was being trained the next week, and announced his intention to do his utmost to prevent another dollar being contributed by that congregation towards the support of that college.

That is irrational. The young man did

not receive that teaching in the class room. It is the product of the corridor and of the student's rooms after the class. The professor might preach in that pulpit and the heart of the Scotchman would be delighted with his sermon. It is not that he is wise enough to avoid irritating topics, but that he knows the ground thoroughly where the young man's taking first steps. He speaks of what is farther on, near the heart of it; the youth speaks of what lies at the entrance. The one sees things in true perspective, the other finds everything hidden by a dust speck that has got into his eye.

Have patience with the young men. They mean well, and will yet do well. They will not do much harm, and by their earnestness will do good. The people will never think of swallowing the indigestible stuff offered them in the corridor dialect. They will take the simple Gospel, and there will always be a mixture of that in the most foolish sermon of the youthful theologian, if his heart be right. Rather let us help the young men through the tangle that meets every young man to-day, through which he must force his way with too little sympathy from those to whom he might naturally look for assistance.

## THE AMERICAN GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The General Assembly now in session in Philadelphia is wrestling with four great problems. The greatest is that of the Creed of the Church. This has been vigorously discussed in the lower courts for a year past. The opinions gathered from these discussions have been embodied in the report presented by the Revision Committee. That report, while perhaps the best that could be prepared under the circumstances is eminently unsatisfactory. It speaks of unrest, yet of unpreparedness to deal with the cause of it. Certainly the best way out of the present difficulty would seem to be the shelving of the question for the present. The discussion that has been aroused may lead to more careful thought upon the question of the Standards, and in a few more years the Church may be in a position to reach a satisfactory finding with respect to this great matter.

A second problem is that of a Supreme Court, which shall have an existence not only when in regular session, as at present, but by judicial committee, during the entire year. We in the Canadian Church shall watch this matter with interest, for there is an overture going up to our own Assembly which is looking in the same direction.

A third problem is already upon us also—the question of vacant churches and unemployed ministers. Our system of settling charges is bad and is rapidly growing worse. It has become a matter of a man looking for a situation, and of a congregation looking for a man, instead of a servant of God being sent to the place assigned to him by his Master. We must deal with this problem of the supply of vacant charges. That is not exactly

the problem before the American Assembly. They are rather dealing with the problem of giving employment to ministers whom the congregations will not call, though the number of vacancies may exceed the men to fill them.

Another question seems strange to us. It is the revolt of the Societies from the authority of the church session. They have been allowed to run untrammelled till last year, when they were put, by resolution of the General Assembly, under the authority of the session. The Women's Societies revolted, and the matter was reconsidered. We have the old-fashioned idea that these societies are already under the authority of the session, and if they are not they ought to be. Certainly the session should be supreme in the church, and no society, old or young, should have an existence except by the authority, and under the cognizance of the session. That is good old-fashioned doctrine, and we hope it will stand.

## THE CANADIAN BIBLE INSTITUTE.

An influential meeting was held in Perth recently to consider a proposition from the Bible Institute to hold a summer gathering at a convenient point on the Rideau Lakes. The Mayor, Mr. J. A. Stewart, presided. The subject was fully discussed, and there seemed to be but one opinion as to the desirability of such a gathering. A strong desire was expressed that large grounds be secured; that suitable buildings should be erected for lectures; and that the grounds should be beautified, until we would have by the Rideau Lakes a Canadian Chatauqua. It was felt that the course of Biblical studies proposed would be to ministers and sabbath school teachers a veritable feast year by year, while the presence of some of our ablest speakers and most beautiful singers would be an education and a charm to all people who have any desire for self-improvement.

Efforts have been made to secure an option on sufficient ground for a permanent meeting place; but the price asked was prohibitive, and the promoters will probably have to look elsewhere. Meanwhile, however, the property owners have freely placed ground at the service of the Institute for this summer; and it was decided to arrange for the summer gathering at Oliver's, and make extensive use of tents for the accommodation of those who wish to come.

The programme of Biblical studies, and the recognized ability of the speakers and singers, with the other educational attractions which are being added, together with the games, boating and fishing, ought to draw a very large audience of our best people. Persons who think that they can attend ought to send in their names to Rev. J. M. McFarlane, M. A., Director of the Canadian Bible Institute, stating specially whether they wish the use of a tent. The meeting is to be held from about July 23rd to Aug. 15th. But tents will be in readiness for campers after July 15th.