

Our Contributors.

SHOULD STUDENTS OF DIVINITY PREACH?

BY KNOXIAN.

A Scotchman who had contracted the habit of taking a drop too much, was spoken to by his minister on the subject and advised to be more careful. During the interview the minister asked him if it was really true that he was becoming intemperate. Sandy thought for a moment, and replied: "Minister, I always like to talk about they things in the abstract." Talking about things in the "abstract" may be pleasant at times, but such talk is not always profitable. There is not much use in discussing the question of student preaching in the "abstract." The question for us is not "Should Students of Divinity Preach?" but should students of divinity in Canada preach? Not long ago, a student in Scotland very nearly lost his Presbyterian certificate for preaching in somebody's pulpit, contrary to the law in such cases made and provided. Happily for us, the standing of students is not endangered by preaching, even though the young man should preach badly. A student has just as good a right to preach poor sermons at times as a minister has. Both parties exercise that undoubted right occasionally and ministers quite as often perhaps as students.

The question then is, Should students of divinity preach in Canada? What they do in Ireland or Scotland or Germany is not a matter of much importance to us. We have students of our own and a Church of our own; work of our own and a country of our own, and we must do the best we can in the circumstances in which Providence has placed us.

The question may be cut down still further. There is no use in asking, Should our students preach in summer? That question simply means, Should we give up our Home Mission work? If we are prepared to give up our Home Mission work then we may along with that surrender make another—we may give up the greater part of our college work too. Whether we need six colleges now or not may be an open question, but if our Home Mission work stops, one college can easily educate all the ministers that will be needed. Let it be understood all round that when Home Mission work stops, the growth of this Church stops, and when the Church stops growing, one-third the present number of students will easily supply the wants of the Church. There is no use in discussing at present the questions, "Should students preach in summer?" Their services are an absolute necessity in this new country. No student preaching in summer would simply mean, no Home Mission field, and no Home Mission field would soon mean, no Presbyterian Church in many parts of Canada.

Now we have the question narrowed down to—Should students preach during the college session? If not, why not? Those who think that students should not exercise their pulpit gifts during the session usually contend that doing pulpit work takes the young man's mind off his studies; that it wastes his time; that it fatigues him so that he is unfit for college work on Monday, or perhaps even Tuesday; that he comes home overworked and sleepy and unable to attend properly to lectures, etc., etc.

Well, if giving an occasional sermon produces all these bad results, perhaps students should not preach during the session; but we venture to say that these dire results exist mainly in the imagination of those clerical doctrinaires who consume their surplus capacity in taking care of the colleges.

Let us see what these assertions amount to when stripped of the pompous verbiage in which they are usually delivered.

"The young man's mind is taken off from his studies." If the young man has been studying hard all week, it is a good thing for him to have his mind taken off his studies. The best rest is a change of work, assuming that a student takes an appointment, say once a month—six times during the session—the change involved can hardly fail to be beneficial. It is a good thing to be taken out of a rut for a day or two. A fresh start is a good thing, fresh air and change of scene are good things. These, and several other good things, come from a run into the country once a month.

"It wastes the student's time." Railway lines run out of Toronto in every direction, and on each of these

lines there is an outgoing train about four o'clock in the afternoon. Trains arrive in the city, on every line, in the forenoon, most of them before eleven o'clock. All the time that a student actually loses, as a rule, is Saturday evening and a part of Monday forenoon, and that amount once a month. Quite likely he would not read very hard on Saturday evening, even if at home. There is absolutely nothing in this time argument. There may be exceptional cases that involve the loss of all Saturday and Monday, but we believe such cases are rare.

"The student comes home so fatigued that he cannot do his class work." Who said so? Not the student, one time in a hundred. There is no fatiguing work in riding fifty or sixty miles in a comfortable railway carriage, and preaching a couple of old sermons. Surely the young men who can beat all Canada playing football, never complain about the fatigue of a short railway ride and the delivery of a couple of short sermons. Not they. They are made of better stuff. The fact is, a fifty mile ride in a nice railway carriage, during which you probably meet half a dozen old friends and have a nice chat, is a good enjoyable thing. There is nothing in this fatigue argument unless students make very long trips, or take long drives to appointments.

Now we might state several positive advantages that are derived from the occasional preaching of students during session. The student comes into touch with the people and that is a good thing. The tendency of college life is to create the impression that the main part of a minister's work is to deal with books. The student has an opportunity to put in practice some of the homiletical precepts he hears about during the week, and that is a good thing. More important than all, the people have the Gospel preached to them in a dozen places every Sabbath that would be vacant perhaps if students did not preach, and that alone is a sufficient reason why they should preach.

THROUGH SOMERSET AND DEVON SHIRE.

FROM A TOURIST'S NOTE BOOK.

We have now seen parts of these beautiful southern counties, and I shall try to give you some of the impressions they made upon me, as we hastily crossed them from Clifton to Torquay.

SOMERSETSHIRE

largely consists of grazing lands which, at certain seasons, are covered with water, owing to the sluggishness of the streams which should carry it seaward. It is in this county that the famous Cheddar cheese was made, but I have been told that Canadian cheese brings higher prices in the London market than Cheddar, and in consequence the farmers have ceased to make it, preferring to sell the milk, which pays them better.

Amongst the towns of the county, perhaps the best known is

BATH,

which has grown greatly in recent years. It is now, as formerly, largely resorted to by invalids, on account of its waters, which are said to be efficacious in certain rheumatic diseases. There are large quarries in the neighbourhood, which supply magnesian limestone for building purposes, such as surround Paris in France. These give employment to many workmen. In speaking of Bath, I cannot omit to name some of the conspicuous people who have been at various times connected with it, the most conspicuous being

"BEAU NASH,"

a native of Swansea in Wales, who came here in 1704, and died here in 1761 at the age of eighty-seven. He was interred at the expense of the corporation in Bath Abbey, where a tablet to his memory was erected in 1790. There is also a statue of him in the Great Pump Room. The house in which he resided, and in which he died, is in the "Sawclose," and bears a white marble tablet. It used to be called "Beau Nash's Palace." Your readers, however, will be more interested in the name of

REV WILLIAM JAY,

who was a pastor in Bath for sixty-three years. He was the son of a mason, and was born in Tisbury in 1769—was educated by Rev. Cornelius Winter at Marlborough, and from his having preached a thousand sermons before he was twenty-one, he was

called the "Boy Preacher." He became pastor of Argyle Chapel in 1791, and died in 1853 at the age of eighty-five, and in the cemetery of the chapel his remains were laid. Two other names will be familiar, at least to students:

WILLIAM MELMOTH,

as the translator of the epistles of Cicero and Pliny, and, if my memory serves me right, the writer of a life of Cicero. He resided at Bath, where he died in 1795, at the age of eighty-nine. A monument to him stands in the Abbey.

DR. ARCHIBALD MACLAINE,

who was born in Monaghan, Ireland, in 1782, died in Bath in 1864, and is interred in the Abbey. Students know him as the translator of Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History."

KINGSWOOD SCHOOL,

for the education of the sons of Wesleyan ministers, which was founded in 1748 by John Wesley, a few miles out of Bristol, as stated in a previous letter, was removed to Bath when the new Kingswood College was completed. It is a much more elegant building, and with play grounds, gardens, lawns, etc., covers some eighteen acres of ground.

MRS. THRALE,

the friend of Dr Johnson, became a resident of Bath in 1781, and three years after she married Mr. Piozzi. She celebrated her eightieth birthday Jan. 27, 1821, the same year in which she died, by a concert, ball and supper, to which, it is said, between six and seven hundred people were invited. Dancing commenced at two o'clock the following morning, Mrs. Piozzi leading off. This illustrates one of the customs prevalent in the early part of the century. She was interred in Walcot Church.

In Bath, 1742, was born Mr. John Palmer, whose name is remembered as the inventor of the mode of carrying the

MAILS BY COACHES,

and for which he received a grant of £50,000. He was elected four times the representative of Bath in the British Parliament, and was interred in the Abbey in 1811—honours enough, certainly, for what in these days we should not call a very great achievement. It gives us, however, a glimpse into a not very distant past which to-day seems strange, and which will sound stranger still before the century closes. The coach was superseded by the steam engine. Electricity and the telephone have come in, and put hundreds of inventions aside. They, too, will have their day, and perhaps disappear. Sir William Thompson, the greatest authority on electricity and on physics, said the other day at a meeting in Scotland: "The steam engine is passing away." So that the boasted science and philosophy of the present may soon be old: Near Bath stands "Stoperton Cottage," long the favourite residence of

THOMAS MOORE,

and where he died in 1852. He was buried in the churchyard of Baynbn Chapel. Those of your readers who may have visited Longfellow's Library at Cambridge must have seen Moore's waste paper basket under the table, on which stood the inkstand of

GEORGE CLIBBE,

the poet, who was rector of Trowbridge, eleven miles from Bath, for eighteen years—1814-1832. A beautiful monument has been erected here to his memory, with four angels hovering above his head. At Frome, two miles farther, is the tomb of

BISHOP KEN,

who composed the beautiful "Morning and Evening Hymns," in the parish church, whose bells and chimes continue to play the tune, "Eventide," set to "Abide With Me," and the Sicilian Mariners' tune. Not far off stands the

OLDEST NONCONFORMIST CHAPEL.

in England. It was built by workmen employed in erecting Longleat House, on ground granted by Sir John Thynne at Hormingham. It was restored in 1866, but still retains its general form—thatched roof, etc. Cut in stone on the front wall is the date of its erection—1566. Seven miles from Bath is Farleigh Hungerford, where

TOPLADY,

the author of some fine hymns, was curate for a time—1764-5—and at Turley House is the old rectory in which