

the latter. I smiled in pity at my pastor's anxiety about the prayer, &c.; and I fear that I forgot, as soon as heard, all his instructions in the matter, except one which I never will forget—to be filled with the strongest possible influence of the Holy Spirit. I immediately selected my text, and began to build up the discourse. I was struck with the entire fitness of things in my coming forward thus to preach, and was surprised that it had never so occurred to me before. My homily was soon evolved, and I only longed for the Sabbath on which to open fire. Convenient to the village was a small but dense wood; thither I regularly repaired, when my daily work was done, to "practise" in the silence of the grove what I was going to preach, the trees being my only audience. Thus passed the first days of my preparation, and if my ardor did somewhat cool towards the close of the first week, it was merely by way (so I had intended) of a short respite, to burst forth again upon the following Monday. But the Sabbath which intervened was fatal to its revival. Our pastor was (and is) an able preacher, and as I listened to his eloquence and depth of thought, I could not but compare his rhetoric with what was to succeed, to the complete proof of the well known axiom in such mental acts. On Monday I felt unhappy, and ominous misgivings began to take root in my mind; I reflected that "after all," &c., &c. The very trees seemed to be getting tired of my daily "representation of the sinner's state," and I gave up the open air preparation, confining myself to certain strains of memorizing. As the week advanced, I began to feel sick and to look around for any possible avenue of escape. No plan appeared available, with the exception of one which suggested itself to my mind as affording a summary relief from the engagement, without incurring any embarrassing questions. I thought of writing to a brother, some fifty miles away, asking him to telegraph for me to come to his side with all haste on Saturday, thus enabling me to make a hasty exit from the place. This idea involved one serious difficulty in the fact that as my brother would naturally conclude that I had become insane, he would come himself instead, and thus create a most undesirable complication of affairs. I therefore came to the conclusion that I must simply fulfil my promise, and take refuge in the resolution never again to engage myself to preach. On the Sabbath morning I approached the prospective place of martyrdom as I would a critical exegesis, or a review in church history. Too modest to enter the pulpit, I stepped within the railing, and took my stand behind a table, against the leaf of which my knees seemed to rattle ominously. The church and all around me seemed spinning in a dizzy whirl, but I clutched the table, and we all went round together. I soon became collected, as I proceeded with my discourse. I will not give an

analysis or a critique thereof; it was not composed for homiletical dissection, and even the benediction was original. But as I proceeded I felt a power welling up in my agitated breast which carried me through with safety, fervor and satisfaction. I have preached the same and other sermons since, but on no subsequent occasion have I been conscious of equal power, nor have felt the same inward gratification as on the conclusion of my first sermon.

HEART SEARCHING.

THE Infinitely-wise God knows us altogether; all that we think, will, and do, our gentlest wishes, our most hidden likings, our most secret purposes are accurately known to Him; and He judges us by the eternal laws of truth and justice. God knows and judges us infinitely better and more justly than we ourselves can do, because He is our Creator and Father; yet, what a vast portion of our precious days and hours is spent in utter obliviousness of this truth! How intermittently are we curbed in God-mocking self-deceit by the solemn conviction that His penetrating eyes scan us and pierce the inmost recesses of our intrinsic self!

But the God who "is love" has not created us to deride our infinite ignorance. Though it is true that, as a result of our finite knowledge, we are, in many respects, the veriest riddle to ourselves; yet, God has implanted reason in us, endowed us with consciousness and understanding, and thereby capacitated us for so far knowing and justly judging of ourselves and our actions, as is necessary to secure our happiness now and perfection hereafter. And how much more prudently, how much more purely, how much more contentedly should we think and act; how much more certainly and wholly become, what according to God's good pleasure we should and might become; did we but continually employ our unusual advantages and our talents to the purposes for which He dispensed them; did we, by the careful and earnest improvement of them, continually grow in the knowledge of, and acquaintance with, ourselves.

It is necessary that, upon all who shall thus grow, the Holy Ghost should descend, to enlighten by his light, and strengthen by His power; and especially fitting is it that we, commencing another academic year, with one eye upon the irrevocable past, and the other upon the unknown future, should fervently pray that God will sanctify our labours to the promotion of a true and salutary knowledge of what we really are. Let us seek that our attention, drawn off from all that is foreign to us, may be wholly directed on our own hearts; and that we may as sincerely and impartially pursue the examination of our condition as the moment of the matter demands.—R. M.

To call a Theological College a "parson factory," as some thoughtless people do, is a vile travesty, and betrays ignorance as well as malice. The Church does *not* make ministers; the Head of the Church alone can do that.—Rev. G. D. Bayne.