

THE PREACHER'S POWER.

IT may be thought imprudent on our part to discuss this subject, as we are still inexperienced and, as heralds of the gospel, have had but little practical proof of the statements we are about to make. Better leave it for men of experience who have had a life-long service in the Christian ministry. There is another point of view, however, from which to discuss it. If as preachers we have not practically discovered the secret of the power of a minister of the gospel, we *have* as laymen ; and from that point of view we prefer to consider it. What preachers have influenced us the most as we sat in the pew or came in contact with them in their pastoral work ? Which of them have made their power felt in our lives by winning us to the Saviour, or by helping us to live more Christlike ? It was not always the highly educated man who could overawe us with his genius and his learning who did so. It is true a preacher must have education to have power, and the more he has of it the better ; but *education alone, or even a superabundance of native genius, is not that power.* Nor does it consist in his talent as a public speaker. How frequently does the eloquent address of the orator fail of producing any permanent effect ! No, the power of education and the power of eloquence are not in themselves sufficient. The preacher may have both of these in a very high degree and yet be a comparative failure as a Christian worker. Behind all these there must be a life, the power of moral character, "a man full of the Holy Ghost and of faith." What does Paul think about it ? He says to the Thessalonians : "For our gospel came not unto you in word only, but in power and in the Holy Ghost, and in much assurance ; as ye know what manner of men we were among you for your sake." The power of ministers then depends on the "manner of men" they are among their people. It is the personality behind the sermon that gives it effect, and not merely its eloquence and learning. The matter and the eloquence may be quite common-place, but if they are backed up by a blameless life, by an unselfish and beneficent individuality, the words of the preacher go home to the hearts of the people and produce the desired result.