

Psychic Power in Preaching.

By the late Rev. J. Spencer Kennard, D.D. Philadelphia. George W. Jacobs & Co.

Dr. Kennard was a preacher of power himself. In many pastorates, in much evangelism, he made full proof of his ministry, and many souls were won to Christ through his preaching. The book is not so much a theory as the unfolding of an experience. Yet there is nowhere an obtrusive egotism. The personal element of the thinking is simply felt, it is not proclaimed. Even if the title strikes one as a little more promising of thorough scientific treatment than is realized in the discussion, there are at least justifying reasons for the use of such a title. For the author does not discuss his theme.

Aristotle gave in his immortal *Rhetoric* some discussion, in his own peculiar fashion, to the psychology of oratory. But his successors, ancient and modern, have not even developed his suggestions. Campbell in his able "*Philosophy of Rhetoric*" broached the subject again, but his treatise could never be regarded as a complete study of its announced theme. Homiletical treatises in various languages pay some attention here and there to the psychology of preaching. But for the most part these books, like those on general rhetoric, give only incidental and superficial attention to the more profound and scientific sides of their subject. This is not to be wondered at, nor criticised sharply, since the primary object of the bulk of these treatises is not to unfold scientific theories, but to give practical instruction. Yet it is strange that the deeper aspects of the great subject of oratory in general and of preaching in particular have not evoked more severe and scientific consideration at the hands of its professors.

As a contribution to the psychology of preaching, in any real scientific way, this useful book of Dr. Kennard's cannot be highly regarded. But let us hasten to say

that in spite of its title this was not its chief aim. Like other books on preaching its object is primarily practical and devotional. It seeks to guide the reader to the higher things of actual spiritual power in the presentation of truth rather than to give a modern and thorough study to the psychological problems suggested by the subject of preaching. There is room for some master of philosophy in its modern developments, who shall also be a preacher of experience, to produce an interesting and useful book dealing with these scientific and philosophical aspects of preaching.

But to get back to Dr. Kennard's book. While it is not profoundly scientific, it is suggestive. Its value lies in its combination of philosophic suggestion with practical teachings and an eminently devout spirit. The principal subjects presented are such as *The Personal Factor in Preaching*, *The Psychology of Style*, *The Psychology of Emotion and Will*, *Sympathy an Element of Psychic Force*, *The Psychic Power of Authority and Love*, and *The Psychic Power of the Holy Spirit*. These titles of chapters show the trend of the book, but, as already intimated, suggest more of science than they give. But there is a pleasing and strong presentation of the topics named—and of others—which cannot fail to profit the attentive reader. Fine grasp, warm feeling, a vigorous if somewhat exuberant style, unite to make up a very interesting and helpful treatment of pulpit problems. The refreshing quality of the book is its departure from the textbook sort of discussion and the suggestion at least of a more philosophical treatment.

The book cannot fail to warm and arouse and instruct the preacher who seeks the higher successes in his great work of calling men to accept the great salvation provided in the gospel.

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