I know now---my visit to the old Country Church was most providential. For my own preaching had become mechanical, religiously professional! For I had fallen into the ---preachers trap! When clerics take the divine into their possession; and bring it under their management! My God! I was but a part of system-makers! I had become Priestly! Ritualistic...

I had lost the prophetic fire! Now I know---how costly to a man is the live coal from off the Altar! "The only saving faith," said Luther, "is that which casts itself on God for life or death!"

If my experience and description of truly great preaching gives you an impression that this incomparable Minister had anything of shallow emotionalism, or cheap revival showmanship---PERISH THAT THOUGHT FROM YOUR MIND! IT IS EVIL! I have never seen anywhere such a uniting of simplicity and majesty of pulpit utterance. His very pulpit posture was natural, not learned. He had not a gesture, attitude, or an accent which did not seem forced by the word he was expressing. His whole person was too serious, too dignified to stoop to a bag of pulpit tricks---For he had none!

This man has been before my imagination ever since. A thousand times when alone; I have stretched forth my hand and tried to imitate his special quote from Rousseau---which he coupled with the phrase from the Battle Hymn of the Republic. A thousand times I have abandoned the attempt in dispair...

I am persuaded that his peculiar manner and power arose from a prophetic energy of soul and spirit which no one could copy. A thousand times I have wondered what ordeal, what melting-pot he came forth from. His blindness? Perhaps...perhaps not...

Granted---certain natural talents came forth with him from his mother's womb. But the secret crucible of life and experience into which he had been cast... had indeed, brought upon him...The ordination of The Pierced Hand.

Now I know...What a cost, in a personal Pentecost!

There was resting upon him that certain "anointing" from the Holy Spirit, which gives power to communicate more than mere words. It is "given"--- yet hammered and forged into a man! The fire shut up in his bosom, in his bones, came out his mouth---and made our hearts burn within us!

No one there knew I was a Preacher. I was glad they did not!

From that Holy Tabernacle in the Wilderness, I came forth a different man. For I am resolved to put more purpose into my life and preaching---God's Purpose! And more Life in my preaching! I confess to you, I envied him. I would give anything, everything...If I could only preach as that man preached...JONAH, *"Preach the preaching I bid thee!"*

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