

Characteristics of the Anointed Preacher When The Holy Ghost is Come.

By Samuel Logan Brengle

"Ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you."

SINCE God saves men by "*the foolishness of preaching*", the preacher has an infinitely important work, and he must be fitted for it. But what can fit a man for such sacred work? Not education alone, not knowledge of books, not gifts of speech, not winsome manners, nor a magnetic voice, nor a commanding presence, but only God. The preacher must be more than a man, he must be a man plus the Holy Ghost.

Paul was such a man. He was full of the Holy Spirit, and in studying his life and ministry we get a life-sized portrait of an anointed preacher living, fighting, preaching, praying, suffering, triumphing and dying in the power and light and glory of the indwelling Spirit.

In the second chapter of the First of Thessalonians he gives us a picture of his character and ministry which were formed and inspired by the Holy Spirit, a sample of His workmanship, and an example for all gospel preachers.

At Philippi Paul had been terribly beaten with stripes on his bare back, and roughly thrust into the inner dungeon, where his feet were made fast in the stocks; but that did neither break nor quench his spirit. Love burned in his heart, and his joy in the Lord brimmed full and bubbled over; and at midnight, in the damp, dark, loathsome dungeon, he and Silas, his comrade in service and suffering, "*prayed, and sang praises unto God*". God answered with an earthquake, and the jailer and his household got gloriously converted. Paul was set free and went at once to Thessalonica, where, regardless of the shameful way he had been treated at Philippi, he preached the gospel boldly, and a blessed revival followed with many converts; but persecution arose, and Paul had again to flee. His heart, however, was continually turning back to these converts, and at last he sat down and wrote them this letter. From this we learn that:

I. He was a Joyful Preacher. He was no pessimist, croaking out doleful prophecies and lamentations and bitter criticisms. He was full of the joy of the Lord. It was not the joy that comes from good health, a pleasant home, plenty of money, wholesome food, numerous and smiling friends, and sunny, favouring skies; but a deep, springing fountain of solemn, gladdening joy that abounded and overflowed in pain and weariness, in filthy, noisome surroundings, in loneliness and poverty, danger and bitter persecutions. No earth-born trial could quench it, for it was Heaven-born; it was' the joy of the Lord' poured into his heart with the Holy Spirit.

2. He was a Bold Preacher. Worldly prudence would have constrained him to go softly at Thessalonica, after his experience at Philippi, lest he arouse opposition and meet again with personal violence; but, instead, he says, *"We were bold in our God to speak unto you the gospel of God with much contention"* (I Thess. ii. 2). Personal considerations were all forgotten, or cast to the winds, in his impetuous desire to declare the gospel and save their souls. He lived in the will of God and conquered his fears. *"The wicked flee when no man pursueth: but the righteous are bold as a lion"* (Prov. xxviii. 1),

This boldness is a fruit of righteousness, and is always found in those who are full of the Holy Ghost. They forget themselves and so lose all fear. This was the secret of the martyrs when burned at the stake or thrown to the wild beasts. Fear is a fruit of selfishness. Boldness thrives when selfishness is destroyed. God esteems it, commands His people to be courageous, and makes spiritual leaders only of those who possess courage (Joshua i. 9).

Moses feared not the wrath of the king, refused to be called the son of Pharaoh's daughter, and boldly espoused the cause of his despised and enslaved people. Joshua was full of courage. Gideon fearlessly attacked one hundred and twenty thousand Midianites, with but three hundred unarmed men. David faced the lion and the bear, and inspired all Israel by battling with and killing Goliath.

The prophets were men of the highest courage, who fearlessly rebuked kings and, at the risk of life and often at the cost of life, denounced popular sins, and called the people back to righteousness and the faithful service of God. These men feared God, thus losing the fear of man. They believed God and so obeyed Him, and were entrusted with His high missions and everlasting employments.

"Fear thou not; for I am with thee," saith the Lord (Isa. xli. 10); and this Paul believed, and so says, *"We were bold in our God."* God was his high tower, his strength and unfailling defence, and so he was not afraid.

Paul's boldness toward man was a fruit of his boldness toward God, and that, in turn, was a fruit of his faith in Jesus as his High Priest, who had been touched

with the feeling of his infirmities, and through whom he could come boldly unto the throne of grace and obtain mercy, and find grace to help in every time of need (Heb. iv. 16).

It is the timidity and delicacy with which men attempt God's work that often accounts for their failure. Let them speak out boldly like men, as ambassadors of Heaven, who are not afraid to represent their King, and they will command attention and respect and reach the hearts and consciences of men.

I have read that quaint old Bishop Latimer, who was afterward burned at the stake,' having preached a sermon before King Henry VIII, which greatly displeased the monarch, was ordered to preach again on the next Sunday, and make apology for the offence given. The day came, and with it a crowded assembly anxious to hear the bishop's apology. Reading his text, he commenced thus: " Hugh Latimer, dost thou know before whom thou art this day to speak? To the high and mighty monarch, the king's most excellent majesty, who can take away thy life if thou offendest. Therefore, take heed that thou speakest not a word that may displease. But, then, consider well, Hugh, dost thou not know from whence thou comest? Upon whose message thou art sent? Even by the great and mighty God, who is allpresent, and who beholdeth all thy ways, and who is able to cast thy soul into Hell! Therefore, take care that thou deliver thy message faithfully."

He then repeated the sermon of the previous Sunday, word for word, but with double its former energy and emphasis. The Court was full of excitement to learn what would be the fate of this plain-dealing and fearless bishop. He was ordered into the king's presence, who, with a stern voice, asked, ' How dared you thus offend me?' I merely discharged my duty,' was Latimer's reply. The king arose from his seat, embraced the good man, saying, ' Blessed be God I have so honest a servant.'

He was a worthy successor of Nathan, who confronted King David with his sin, and said, ' Thou art the man.' This divine courage will surely accompany the fiery baptism of the Spirit.

What is it but the indwelling of the Holy Spirit that gives courage to Salvation Army officers and soldiers, enabling them to face danger and difficulty and loneliness with joy, and attack sin in its worst forms as fearlessly as David attacked Goliath?

"Not by might, nor by power, but by My Spirit, saith the Lord." (Zech. iv. 6).

*Shall I, for fear of feeble man,
The Spirit's course in me restrain? ...*

*Awed by a mortal's frown, shall I
Conceal the word of God most high? ...*

*Shall I, to soothe the unholy throng,
Soften Thy truths and smooth my tongue? . . .
How then before Thee shall I dare
To stand, or how Thine anger bear? . . .*

*Yea, let men rage, since Thou wilt spread
Thy shadowing wings around my head;
Since in all pain Thy tender love
Will still my sure refreshment prove.*

3. He was Without Guile.' For our exhortation was not of deceit, nor of uncleanness, nor in guile: But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the gospel, even so we speak; not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts' (I Thess. ii. 3, 4).

He was frank and open. He spoke right out of his heart. He was transparently simple and straightforward. Since God had honoured him with this infinite trust of preaching the gospel, he sought to preach it that he should please God regardless of men. And yet that is the surest way to please men. People who listen to such a man feel his honesty, and realize that he is seeking to do them good, to save them rather than to tickle their ears and win their applause, and in their hearts they are pleased.

But, anyway, whether or not they are pleased, he is to deliver his message as an ambassador and look to his home government for his reward. He gets his commission from God, and it is God who will try his heart and prove his ministry. Oh, to please Jesus! Oh, to stand perfect before God after preaching His gospel!

4. He was not a time-server nor a Covetous Man.' Neither at any time used we flattering words, as ye know, nor a cloak of covetousness; God is witness,' he adds.

There are three ways of reaching a man's purse: (1) Directly. (2) By way of his head with flattering words. (3) By way of his heart with manly, honest, saving words. The first way is robbery. The second way is robbery, with the poison of a deadly, but pleasing, opiate added, which may damn his soul. The third reaches his purse by saving his soul and opening in his heart an unfailing fountain of benevolence to bless himself and the world.

It were better for a preacher to turn highwayman and rob men with a club and a strong hand, than, with smiles and smooth words and feigned and fawning affection, to rob them with flattery, while their poor souls, neglected and

deceived, go down to Hell. How will he meet them in the Day of judgment and look into their horror-stricken faces, realizing that he played and toyed with their fancies and affections and pride to get money and, instead of faithfully warning them and seeking to save them, with flattering words fattened their souls for destruction?

Not so did Paul. 'I seek not yours, but you,' he wrote the Corinthians. It was not their money, but their souls he wanted.

But such faithful love will be able to command all men have to give. Why, to some of his converts he wrote: 'I bear you record, that, if it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes, and have given them to me' (Gal. iv. 15). But he sought not to please them with flattering words, only to save them. So faithful was he in this matter, and so conscious of his integrity, that he called God Himself into the witness-box. 'God is witness,' says he. Blessed is the man who can call on God to witness for him; and that man in whom the Holy Spirit dwells in fullness can do this. Can you, my brother?

5. He was not Vain-glorious, nor Dictatorial, nor Oppressive. Some men care nothing for money, but they care mightily for power and place and the glory that men give. But Paul was free from this spiritual itching. Listen to him: 'Nor of men sought we glory, neither of you, nor yet of others, when we might have been burdensome (or, used authority), as the apostles of Christ' (I Thess. ii. 6).

Said Solomon, 'For men to search their own glory is not glory' (Prov. xxv. 2 7), it is only vain-glory.' How can ye believe, which receive honour one of another, and seek not the honour that cometh from God only?' asked Jesus (John v. 44)

From all this Paul was free, and so is every man who is full of the Holy Ghost. And it is only as we are thus free that with the whole heart and with a single eye we can devote ourselves to the work of saving men.

6. With all his boldness and faithfulness he was Gentle. 'We were gentle among you,' he says, 'even as a nurse cherisheth her children' (I Thess. ii. 7).

The fierce hurricane which casts down the giant trees of the forest is not so mighty as the gentle sunshine, which, from tiny seeds and acorns, lifts aloft the towering Spires of oak and fir on a thousand hills and mountains.

The wild storm that lashes the sea into foam and fury is feeble compared to the gentle, yet immeasurably powerful influence, which twice a day swings the oceans in resistless tides from shore to shore.

As in the physical world the mighty powers are gentle in their vast workings, so it is in the spiritual world. The light that falls on the lids of the sleeping infant and

wakes it from its slumber, is not more gentle than the 'still small voice' that brings assurance of forgiveness or cleansing to them that look unto Jesus.

Oh, the gentleness of God! 'Thy gentleness hath made me great,' said David (Ps. xviii. 35). 'I . . . beseech you by the meekness and gentleness of Christ' (2 Cor. x. 1), wrote Paul. And again, 'The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, longsuffering, gentleness' (Gal. v. 22). And as the Father, Son and Holy Ghost are gentle, so will be the servant of the Lord who is filled with the Spirit.

I shall never forget the gentleness of a mighty man of God whom I well knew, who on the platform was clothed with zeal as with a garment, and in his overwhelming earnestness was like a lion or a consuming fire; but when dealing with a wounded or broken heart, or with a seeking soul, no nurse with a little babe could be more tender than he.

7. Finally, Paul was full of Self-forgetful, Self-sacrificing Love. 'So being affectionately desirous of you, we were willing to have imparted unto you, not the gospel of God only, but also our own souls, because ye were dear unto us' (1 Thess. ii. 8).

No wonder he shook those heathen cities, overthrew their idols, had great revivals, his jailer was converted, and his converts would have gladly plucked out their eyes for him! Such tender, self-sacrificing love compels attention, begets confidence, enkindles love, and surely wins its object.

This burning love led him to labour and sacrifice, and so live and walk before them that he was not only a teacher, but an example of all he taught, and could safely say, 'Follow me.'

This love led him to preach the whole truth, that he might by all means save them. He kept back no truth because it was unpopular, for it was their salvation and not his own reputation and popularity he sought.

He preached not himself, but a crucified Christ, without the shedding of whose Blood there is no remission of sins; and through that precious Blood he preached present cleansing from all sin, and the gift of the Holy Spirit for all who obediently believe.

And this love kept him faithful and humble and true to the end, so that at last in sight of the martyr's death, he saw the martyr's crown and cried out: 'I am now ready to be offered . . . I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day' (2 Tim. iv. 6-8).

He had been faithful, and now at the end he was oppressed with no doubts and harassed with no bitter regrets, but looked forward with eager joy to meeting his Lord and beholding the blessed face of Him whom he loved. Hallelujah!

Have you received the Holy Ghost?

*'Twill fit you for the fight,
'Twill make of you a mighty host
To put your foes to flight.*

*Have you received the holy power?
'Twill fall from Heaven on you,
From Jesus' throne this very hour,
'Twill make you brave and true.*

*O now receive the holy fire!
'Twill burn away all dross,
All earthly, selfish, vain desire,
'Twill make you love the Cross.*

"HAVE YE RECEIVED THE HOLY GHOST SINCE YE BELIEVED?"