

Rev Edward Alford

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by Robert R Connell

The Rev. E. Alford departed this life July 4th, 1909, at St. Annes-on-the-Sea, Lancs., aged sixty-eight years, having served our church in the active ministry forty-three years, and seven years as a supernumerary. He was born on January 22nd, 1841, at Mere, in the Motcombe Circuit, Dorset. His father was a leading tradesman of the town, highly respected, a trustee of our church, and for many years superintendent of the Sabbath School.

A great religious awakening took place at Mere and the surrounding villages, when the subject of this sketch was in his teens, and he and a number of youths were converted and joined our Church. Out of this revival several young men were called into our ministry, viz., E. Alford, his brother (who after a few years of successful toil died at Southampton), L. Norris, G.E. Butt, H. Portnell, C. Portnell and others.

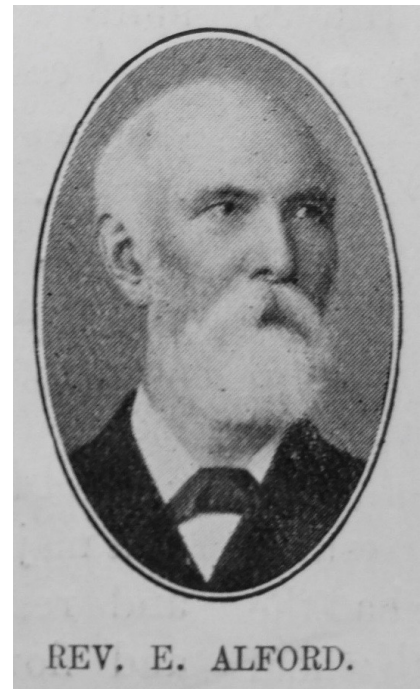
Mr. Alford commenced his ministry at the early age of eighteen, and travelled on the following stations: Chipping Norton, Aylesbury, Swindon, Banbury, Witney, Chinnor, Farringdon, Newbury, Motcombe, Oldham II, Bury, Todmorden, Leighton Buzzard, Grays and Romford, and Lavender Hill, London.

As a preacher he studied to be approved of God, a workman that needed not to be ashamed. His sermons were studiously and prayerfully prepared on evangelical lines, and by their delivery resulted in many being led to Christ, and the building up of the churches in the faith of the Gospel.

He was a student to the end of his life, and ever delighted to enrich his heart and mind with the best reading. As a theologian he belonged to the conservative school, but was singularly free from bitterness in relation to the modern movements of religious thought. He kept his soul open to the light and welcomed it from whatever quarter it might come.

He was one of the most modest of men, delighted in the successes of others, but sought no honours for himself. He was ever anxious to maintain the dignity and honour of our great church, and was a loyal Primitive Methodist at all costs.

He was always popular with young men, he never grew old, and delighted to enter into the ambitions and help in the troubles of his colleagues. His death has meant to many a ministerial brother not merely the loss of an official comrade, but the loss of a loving companionship. The many letters that have come from former colleagues testify to his remarkable power to awaken love in others. His strength kindled admiration, his sympathy awakened love.



As a family visitor he excelled. Systematically and regularly in the towns and villages of his stations he visited the homes of the people of his charge, and his visits were looked forward to with pleasurable anticipations by old and young. Of genial disposition and courteous manners, a perfect gentleman, he always made himself at home and poor and rich alike felt at home with him. The children delighted to listen to his talks on good things, and his happy laugh was infectious.

There is no question but that his pastoral work was of that pleasing, social, and religious character that greatly added to his ministerial usefulness and popularity.

As an administrator he was statesmanlike, and successfully dealt with chapel and other church difficulties as they arose. A man of sound judgment, clear insight and brotherly love, he knew how to rule in kindness and firmness, and officials readily and heartily gave him their confidence and active support. The splendid church and manse property belonging to the Connexion at Newbury, and the Manse at Leighton Buzzard were built during his superintendency of those stations in addition to many other properties that are part of our denominational wealth.

Superannuated in 1892, owing to a slight affection of the heart, it was hoped at the time that the complaint was only temporary, as he had enjoyed robust health, but it proved otherwise. He subsequently took partial work on the Upton Park and Marylebone Stations, London, and rendered good service by occasional preaching and pastoral work.

He removed to St. Annes-on-the Sea about nine months ago, and proved a valuable helper in the foundation of the New Mission opened in that town by the Rev. G. Bicheno, under the auspices of the General Missionary Committee.

His death was due to pleurisy and heart failure, and as the shadows gathered about him he delighted still in the welfare of his church, was cheered by a message of the Conference sitting at Southport, and in half-conscious moments was heard again and again to repeat those holy testimonies that had in other days made his evangel the power of God unto salvation in many lives.

He was twice married, his first wife being Miss Biggs, daughter of Mr. Joseph Biggs, one of the early leaders of the Aylesbury Circuit, and his second wife, who now mourns his loss, being the sister of Mr. John Clegg, an active and generous supporter of the Mission at St. Annes-on-the-Sea.

By his first wife he leaves a family of six children, one of them being the wife of the Rev. A. T. Guttery, General Missionary Secretary.

His funeral service was largely attended by representative ministers and laymen, for he was a man greatly beloved and highly esteemed.

References

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