

Rev. Thomas Martindale

Transcription of obituary published in the Primitive Methodist Magazine by B. Fell

REV. THOMAS MARTINDALE: Was born at Yapham, in the Pocklington circuit, January 28, 1847, and was from infancy the subject of religious influences and religious training, to which under God he owed his early conversion and subsequent life of usefulness. His was the lot of one whose parents fear God and work righteousness, and by example and precept live for the salvation of their children. Their house was the home of the Primitive Methodist ministers for more than thirty years, and beneath their roof the little society met and worshipped. Hence the advantages of our brother were exceptional and happily no less effectual. The good seed took root in his youthful heart and before he had reached his twelfth year he was savingly converted to God. He at once united himself with the Yapham society, and gave pleasing evidence that his professed change of heart was genuine. Even those who had hitherto doubted the conversion of children were made to feel that Divine grace was assuredly manifesting itself in this young life. In the class meeting and prayer meeting he soon gave proof of religious growth and adaptability for a prominent place in the church of God.

At the age of sixteen years his name appeared on the Pocklington circuit plan, where as a youth he laboured with considerable acceptance and success. Eighteen months afterwards he was engaged by the Malton circuit as a hired local preacher, where he saw many souls saved. Leaving Malton he went to labour on the Easingwold Branch of the York circuit, and witnessed most encouraging success. In 1868 he entered the Theological Institute, Sunderland, where he spent a happy year, and was much benefited and blessed. The Conference of 1869 stationed him for the Doncaster circuit; there he remained two years, and made many friends, among whom he is still held in high esteem. He subsequently laboured in the Grimsby First circuit two years, and in Scarborough two years, where he had many seals to his ministry.

He was united in marriage to Miss Jane Palliser, Sutton-on-Forest, July 9, 1873. This union promised him much happiness, but after a few short months God called her to Himself. From Scarborough he removed to Scotter, where through failing health he was compelled to lay aside from active labour nearly the whole of the year. While at Scotter he contracted a second marriage with Miss Louisa Dixon, third daughter of Mr. E. Dixon, Scarborough.

The Conference of 1876 stationed him for Bournemouth in the Poole Circuit, with the hope that in a more congenial climate he might recruit his wasted strength and energies. But the hand of death had marked him for destruction. Consumption fastened upon his vitals and defied all medical skill. He was intensely anxious to be made a blessing in Bournemouth, and commenced his work in the true missionary spirit. He had a thousand handbills printed and circulated, announcing the mission-room services, and setting forth the nature and object of his work. He had it in his heart to build a house for God worthy of the Connexion, and was sanguine of his success. But how soon his hopes were blighted. Before a month had passed away his disease showed fatal symptoms, and little by little he was compelled to lay aside his duties. He, however, continued to preach occasionally until October, though he frequently left the pulpit exhausted and prostrate. His last public effort was at Poole, on Sunday, Oct. 23. After announcing the text in the morning, his strength utterly failed him, and he was unable to proceed with the service. In the evening he made another and a final attempt to preach and was enabled to speak a short time from, "Quench not the Spirit." He returned home prostrate and gradually became weaker and weaker still.

He was soon unable to walk more than a few yards at once, then an invalid's carriage was necessary, confinement to his room followed, and with the commencement of the new year it became evident that his end was fast approaching. He took entirely to his bed, and soon became so weak that he could not move his head on the pillow. He sometimes suffered much, but he never murmured. When asked if he wished to get well, he replied, "If the Lord will, for the sake of my wife and little one;" but added, "the Lord's will be done." When told how much his loss would be felt, he said, "It is the Lord, let him do what seemeth him good." Once when feeling much pain he said, "As soon as my feet are on the golden pavement, there will be no more pain." The last few days of his life were spent in praising God, and almost the last words he uttered were, "Blessed Jesus!"

Many of the resident ministers to whom he had endeared himself and other devout people gathered around him in his last hours; a tender, devoted wife watched over him with unceasing care, and nothing was lacking that kindness or skill could devise to smooth his pathway to the tomb. But a thousand times more precious than all besides was the conscious presence of Jesus. Assured of this, death had no terrors. The apprehensions he had sometimes felt in life that he should be afraid to die, were now unknown. Truly he realized the experience of the Psalmist: "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil; for thou art with me; thy rod and thy staff they comfort me." And so he passed away on the 22nd of January, 1877, within a few days of his thirtieth year.

His mortal remains were interred in the Christchurch cemetery, by the Rev. G. Morgan, and were followed to the grave by the ministers of the various denominations of the town, his relatives and friends. His death was improved by the writer on Sunday evening, March 25, to a large congregation in the Jubilee chapel, Scarborough. Mr. Martindale was much respected and loved by almost all who knew him. Genial, kindhearted, and affectionate, he necessarily made many friends. He was intensely earnest, had a passion for saving souls, possessed more than ordinary ability, and promised to take rank among the best preachers of the Connexion.

The Rev. T. Whittaker says of him, "He was a man of genuine, unquestionable piety; intensely anxious to do good and serve the Connexion and the cause of Christ. His zeal was self-consuming, and sometimes carried him to excess and an extravagant expenditure of physical strength which he could not afford. I always found him a thoroughly honest man, whom I could trust without the least misgiving, and whom I could love. There was a tenderness and kindliness of disposition about him, linked with an unreserved consecration to his work, and a grand and sanctified enthusiasm that drew my heart towards him. He was a young man of good parts, he had an intense thirst for knowledge, was very apt at sermonizing, was often mighty in the pulpit and had great power in prayer. I regarded him as a young man of great promise, and with great possibilities within his reach."

Several eminent ministers have borne similar testimony to his work. In his removal the writer has lost a dear and valued friend, and the Connexion an able and successful minister.

References

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