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The Message The Methodist Conference Would Not Allow Me To Preach

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Mossley Orange Hall

I must confess that I have never been asked to preach at the annual Methodist Conference in Belfast. Nevertheless, when I read some of the statements contained in sermons preached at this conference it was abundantly clear that any men with a message of truth would not be welcomed at this affair. I quote for example a guest speaker at the conference, Dr. Alfred Martin. In Tuesday, 13th June's issue of the "Newsletter" we read the following words concerning the obedience of Methodists to the spirit of false ecumenism - "Already you have made it clear that if loyalty to Christ and obedience to his EXPRESSED COMMAND AND SPIRIT are called Romeward trends by knaves seeking a trap for fools then you are willing to be misunderstood."

What was Alfie demanding as obedience, what was he seeking from the Methodists? Listen to some more of his sermonising, this time as reported in the "Belfast Telegraph". "Dr. Martin asked if the time had not come when they should come together in the South and West, allowing the people to worship together in the same building and to be given the Sacraments in accordance with their own beliefs".

Again we ask a question - Who is it should come together? According to the report in the newspaper it is the Protestant and the Roman Catholics. Plainly then Dr. Martin is saying

that it is the "expressed command and spirit of Christ" that Roman Catholics and Protestants come together to worship in the same building.

In answer to these statements by Dr. Martin I want to say firstly that he is an old-time, black-hearted, hell-inspired liar. If this kind of preaching is welcomed at the annual gathering of the Methodists then I am absolutely sure that I, with a message of truth, would not be allowed to preach.

To prove the falsehood of Dr Martin's statements let us turn to the 1st Epistle of Paul to Timothy and verses 1-6 of chapter 4. Here, very plainly given are some "express" revelations by the Spirit of God.

Contained in verse 6 there is a description of a good minister of Jesus Christ. Dr. Martin terms those who oppose ecumenism as "knaves making a trap for fools". This is his description of those who resist the Rome-ward trends, but how does such a minister measure up to Paul's description?

Do Paul's writings agree with Dr. Martin? It is my intention to prove that they do not and that Dr. Martin is an opposer of truth and light.

What then is a GOOD MINISTER OF JESUS CHRIST? Paul is writing to Timothy his "son in the faith" and fellowsoldier in the fight, and he here passes on some fatherly advice concerning his ministry. "If thou put the brethren in remembrance of these things thou shalt be a good minister of Jesus Christ". Timothy was to remind the brethren of certain things to qualify himself as a good minister of Jesus Christ. It but remains for us to examine what "these things" are, of which the servant of Christ is constantly to remind the brethren.

These things refer firstly to:-



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I. THE WARNINGS OF THE SPIRIT

There are many warnings placed in the Scriptures by the Spirit, and if a man preach them faithfully then his ministry is that of a good servant of Jesus Christ. Paul tells Timothy of one of the warnings of the Spirit in this portion, and in a particular sense Paul said that if you remind the brethren of this warning you shall be qualifying yourself as a preacher of righteousness.

He warns of a great apostasy.

Many were to turn away from the truth, giving heed to seducing spirits. There was to be firstly a departure from the faith.

Doctrines of devils were to be adhered to rather than Gospel truths. Men were going to turn to and follow the seductive invitations of the god of this world, even Satan. Speaking lies in hypocrisy to cloak their blatant denials of Gospel light they would return as a dog to his vomit and as a sow to her wallowing.

To-day in the ministries of the Methodist Church of Ireland and Irish Presbyterian churches there are those who speak lies in hypocrisy and whose consciences have been seared with a hot iron.

At his ordination, every Presbyterian minister and elder swears that he believes the Holy Scriptures to be the Word of God. Yet there are those like Dr. Breakey who deny certain parts of the Bible. There are men who depart from the faith. Men like Alfred Martin swore that the "Pope was the Man of Sin and Son of Perdition that exalteth himself in the church", yet here we find him advocating reunion with the unclean and cursed system of worship that the Pope leads. These are liars, departers from the faith and if I am to qualify as a "good minister" I must speak out against them and put the brethren in remembrance. A knave to Alfred Martin? Maybe, but praise God, a good minister according to God the Holy Ghost.

Jogging the memory concerning the great Apostasy is one aspect of my ministry but I must also remind men of their individual apostasy in Adam.

II. THE WANDERINGS OF SINNERS

Men depart from the fold because by nature men are wanderers. Adam wandered from the Law of God. Instead of keeping to the clearly marked paths of righteousness he strayed into 'By-path Meadow'. His sons did likewise until we read in Genesis 6 that the whole earth was filled with corruption, so causing God to repent of His ever making man.

David knew that he was a wanderer. Psalm 119:10. "O let me not wander from thy commandments." The Psalmist knew that if he were left on his own he would wander away from God.

Isaiah also confessed this for his whole nation. "All we like sheep have gone astray, we have turned every one to his own way."

The Prodigal son wandered, mankind is wandering and if men would confess the truth that lies heavy on their conscience they would say "I have gone astray like a lost sheep," Psalm. 119:176.

Mankind is lost, helplessly floundering around and finding no place of refuge. Lost in time means lost forever in eternity. Found and safe in time means heaven for eternity.

To-night finds you lost, sinner, lost and wandering. Somewhere there is the brink of eternity, somewhere in the darkness. Is it to the left hand or is it to the right, front or rear? As you stumble on, one of these days you are going to find it only to be lost forever. I must labour this point, I must convince you of your lost and perilous state for if I do not I cannot claim to be a good minister of Jesus Christ.

Let me close with one last qualification. A good minister must also remind men of:



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III. THE WAY OF SALVATION.

How empty would be a ministry of pointing out merely the errors of Apostates and the failings of sinners. The good minister of Jesus Christ must also point to the Cross of Calvary. Like John the Baptist he may find it necessary to point to the Pharisees and Sadducees of his generation and say, "O generation of vipers" but it is also necessary to cry aloud with the same prophet, "Behold the lamb of God".

The wandering sinners can be found and brought home. In the parable of the lost sheep Christ is portrayed as the Shepherd who goes out looking for the lost sheep, seeking it until He finds it, and then, placing it upon His shoulders, brings it home with much rejoicing.

From the Word of God to-night you have heard of your lost and dangerous condition. As your true state has been revealed to you, conviction of sin has laid hold on your heart. You have trembled as you viewed an eternity dark and ominous with righteous judgment. Yes, the light of holy truth has shone around you. It has exposed the fact that the path you tread terminates in a Christless hell!

But praise God the same word tells us of One who "came to seek and to save that which was lost." In Psalm 107, we read these words. "They wandered in the wilderness in a solitary way: they found no city to dwell in. Hungry and thirsty their soul fainted in them. Then they cried unto the LORD in their trouble," verses 4-6. Israel was wandering lost and thirsty in the wilderness and remained so until she CRIED UNTO THE LORD.

Those who are awakened to their need of Christ, those who are troubled by their lost state will ever remain so until that cry escapes their lips: "God be merciful to me a sinner."

I point to-night to Jesus Christ as the sinners only hope. He alone can guide your wandering feet into the path of righteousness. He alone is the way of salvation. Listen to His words in John 14:6: "I am the Way". May someone here tonight seek the Saviour and find that with David he can say "THE LORD is my Shepherd, I shall not want," Psalm 25:11.

Remember again the words of Peter, "Whosoever shall call on the name of the LORD shall be saved," Acts 2:21.

May you call and call now for Christ's sake.

AMEN.